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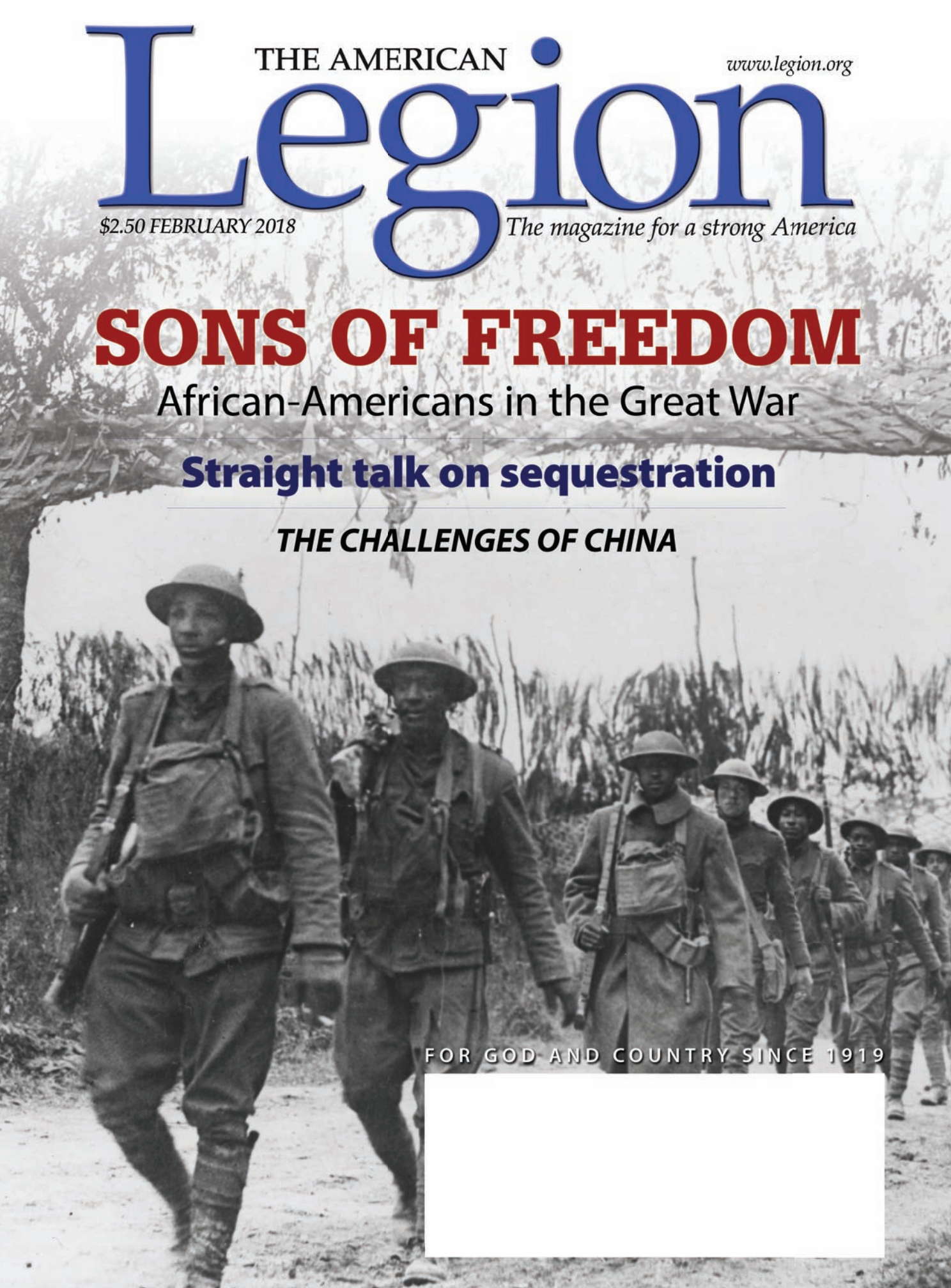
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U.S. Army infantry troops of an African-American unit march northwest of Verdun in November 1918. *Getty*

THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

At Belmont Park racetrack in Elmont, N.Y., an American Legion plaque honors Army Lts. George L. Fox, John P. Washington, Alexander D. Goode and Clark V. Poling – the Four Chaplains – who gave up their life vests to fellow soldiers when SS *Dorchester* sank Feb. 3, 1943. American Legion posts worldwide honor their sacrifice every February. *Getty*



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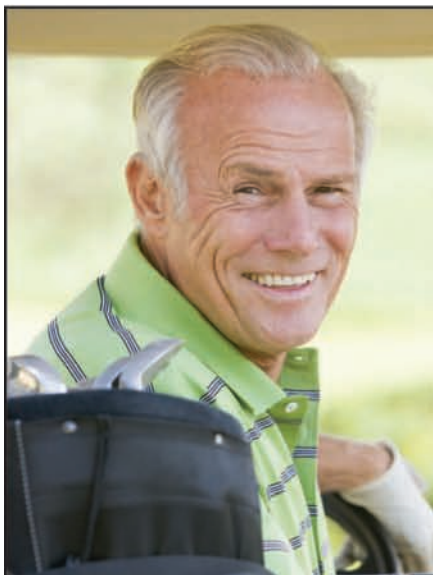
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'Ski Patrol'

Thank you for the feature article by Ken Olsen on the National Ski Patrol (December). My brother-in-law was a combat-wounded World War II veteran who served on the Mount Spokane Ski Patrol for more than 25 years. He held a national rank and was an active regional trainer. He served on the patrol well into his 70s; he is now 91.

I learned to ski while in the Air Force, stationed at Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks, Alaska. It was a little slope but a good place to learn the basics. Almost 30 years later, after skiing just as a hobby, I decided to follow in my brother-in-law's footsteps and joined the Spirit Mountain Ski Patrol in Duluth, Minn. I served on that patrol for 20 years. I've been a member of The American Legion for more than 50 years, joining in my hometown where my father was a charter member when the Legion formed after World War I. Thanks again for honoring those who serve in both the military and the National Ski Patrol.

— Joe Mogen, Moose Lake, Minn.

I was struck while reading the article on Cleo Howell and the other Ski Patrol volunteers. When you start to get the picture of all they give back to society, they are truly amazing.

After finishing the article, I happened to glance at the cover photo and all became clear. There, on the underside of Howell's ski tip, is the very distinct emblem of Freemasonry worldwide. One of the lessons we teach every new master mason is to seek ways to serve your fellow citizens while asking nothing in return. It is a subtle but vivid reminder of who and what we try to be.

Thank you for the tip of the hat to the fraternity I am proud to be a part of.

— Paul S. Ingram, Ferndale, Wash.

I enjoyed reading the article about veterans joining the Ski Patrol and its ties to the U.S. military, having been an avid skier before, during and after my Army service. Thus, I was disappointed that Ken Olsen failed to mention that the Army had an active dedicated ski patrol in at least three Air Force Reserve Command locations (Garmisch, Berchtesgaden and Chiemsee) in Germany. These were small units of volunteers from U.S. military units in Germany, picked for this highly-sought-after temporary service. (I was fortunate to be one of them.) Duties included patrolling the ski slopes of Germany's highest mountain – no matter how bad the weather – and assisting with many

gruesome and severe ski accidents. After their military service, many continued to pursue their love of skiing and assisting others by becoming ski patrolmen and instructors in Aspen, Breckenridge and Lake Tahoe, among other resorts.

– Boris Derugin, St. George, Utah

Improving VA care

Here's a suggestion for higher-quality VA care (Veterans Update, December): VA needs to put more veterans in places like administration and patient care, and hire former preventive medicine techs in disability-claims sections, because we performed these duties in the military. Yet VA hires thousands of untrained and unqualified people to do this very important job, delaying proper processing of disability claims. Then it cannot figure out why backlogs are increasing in numbers and time for determination.

– Paul W. Conlin II, Decatur, Ill.

'The Horn Is His Life'

This was a wonderful story by Henry Howard (Rapid Fire, December), but many people are not aware of an organization called Bugles Across America. Members come from all walks of life and volunteer to sound taps at veterans' internments. The federal government cannot fund live buglers for these, and sends a servicemember who carries a bugle with a digital player in the bell. It is a good recording but lacks the heart of a live player. Visit buglesacrossamerica.org to learn more.

– David Powell, San Diego

'Storm of Support'

In reading this article (Rapid Fire, November), I couldn't help but notice the picture of donated clothes. As an emergency management professional, I can tell you that these unsolicited donations often create another disaster, tying up resources and personnel that could otherwise focus on disaster recovery. Historically, most of these types of donations go unused and create a logistical nightmare for the jurisdictions where they arrive, essentially prolonging the recovery process.

A friend in a similar position told me that after a disaster they had 800 pallets of household items that cost more than \$100,000 to store. Keep in mind that when one organization starts to handle these types of donations, more follow suit.

Monetary support in the form of gift cards and donations to trusted charitable organizations, such as The American Legion, will do far more and actually meet the needs of those affected by disaster than any goods or care packages one could donate.

For those who donate to recovery operations, we have to ask ourselves: is the end state to make us feel better or to do some good? If it's to do good, keep your stuff and send money through charitable groups and organizations. If you can't do that, spread the word about what really constitutes a donation or volunteer. Just think how a post could repurpose the human capital it takes to sort the clothes, and help in other ways.

– Jason Junkens, Ponca City, Okla.

Full funding of border wall

Rep. Steven Palazzo, R-Miss., parrots the closed-minded, basically isolationist agenda advanced by President Trump and his followers (Big Issues, November). He spends two-thirds of his column trumpeting measures that don't address the funding of the wall, then proudly notes that his subcommittee could provide \$1.6 billion for it. That would cover a huge 75-mile segment of the proposed 2,000 miles. A lot more billions would be needed – and it would still end up as useless as the Great Wall of China for anything but tourist business.

Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, suggests using a combination of advanced technologies, based on capability gap analysis, to cover those 2,000 miles – all of which would provide much better coverage without the erection of a white-elephant eyesore, and would likely cost more on the order of \$1 million to \$2 million per mile. A measure like that – bolstered by an increase in trained border patrol agents – would achieve the desired heightened border security, without desecration of the natural landscape and building a wall that shouts to Mexico, "You are our enemy, keep out," instead of recognizing it as one of our biggest trading partners.

– Ted Raymond, El Mirage, Ariz.

Editor's note: The Army's 87th Mountain Infantry was designated as a battalion in 1941 and expanded into a regiment in 1943, and is not a division ("Ski Patrol," December).

THE AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS

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Lincoln's promises, and ours

Fourscore and three years ago, The American Legion began a solemn tradition of honoring Abraham Lincoln. On Feb. 12, I will have the privilege of visiting Springfield, Ill., and placing a wreath at the tomb of our 16th president during observances of his birthday.

The observances coincide with the 84th Annual National American Legion Pilgrimage to the Tomb of Abraham Lincoln, a tradition started in 1935 by Post 32 in Illinois' capital city.

Remarkably, the pilgrimage has had only four chairmen: World War I veteran Herbert Tragethon; World War II veteran Noel "Whitey" Moore; Vietnam War veteran Michael Walton, who coordinated the event for 35 years, until 2012; and current chairman Tony Libri, a veteran of Bosnia, Panama and Afghanistan.

Libri believes the pilgrimage is the longest-running celebration of Lincoln's birthday in the nation. "We do this to bring attention to one of America's greatest presidents, and since it's his hometown, we want to honor his birth," he says.

Though Lincoln died a half-century before the founding of The American Legion, his second inaugural address anticipated the need for such an organization. "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan" is not just a promise to those who fought the Civil War. It is a pillar of The American Legion.

We know that the men and women in today's armed forces fight for the country they love. Like the soldiers of Lincoln's day, they bravely go into harm's way knowing they might sacrifice life or limb in its defense.

It's why The American Legion provides scholarships to the children of the fallen and severely wounded. It's why Operation Comfort Warriors strives to meet the needs of wounded, injured or ill military personnel by providing items or recreational experiences not usually supplied by the government. It's why the Legion has more than 3,000 accredited service officers, dedicated to helping veterans receive the benefits they have earned, free of charge and regardless of Legion membership.

As inspirational as his promise to veterans and their families remains today, another pledge Lincoln made at Gettysburg resonates, too: that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." The American Legion Family understands all too well the sacrifices necessary for the survival of representative democracy.

We take Lincoln's words seriously. We always have.

And so the pilgrimage to his tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery is far more than a wreath-laying ceremony. It's a celebration of the life of the "Great Emancipator." Legion Family members can receive discounted tickets to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield on Feb. 11 and 12. Other activities include an open house at Post 32, and an official breakfast and luncheon in downtown Springfield.

American Legion Auxiliary National President Diane Duscheck, Sons of The American Legion National Commander Danny Smith and I would be honored if you would join us in celebrating Lincoln's legacy. To purchase meal tickets or obtain a schedule of events, go to www.springfieldamericanlegion.com or call (217) 523-3415.

Denise H. Rohan



National Commander
Denise H. Rohan

MEMORANDA

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

Members of the American Legion Family will visit Capitol Hill during the 58th Washington Conference in February. Events include:

Roundtable on Military

Credentialing, Washington Hilton, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 22

Boots to Business Reboot

Workshop, Washington Hilton, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 23

Hiring Our Heroes Career Fair

Washington Hilton, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 23

SAL Wreath Laying

Arlington National Cemetery/Korean War Memorial/World War II Memorial, 7:45 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb. 25

Veterans Education Symposium

Washington Hilton, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Feb. 25

"Know Before You Go"

legislative briefing, Washington Hilton, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Feb. 26

Commander's Call

Washington Hilton, 8 a.m. Feb. 27 (streamed live at www.legion.org)

Women Veterans Focus Group

Washington Hilton, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Feb. 27

National Commander's

Testimony, Capitol Hill, Feb. 28

Times and dates are subject to change.

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PATRICIA HARRIS

Patricia Harris has been a part of the American Legion Family since childhood. The daughter of a World War II veteran, she joined Unit 157's Junior Auxiliary in Raleigh, N.C., as a girl and grew up in and around the post. Even then, her father's Legion cap made an impression on her.

"When I put his cap on, my dad told me, 'You only have two minutes to put that cap on, and then you have to take it off,'" Harris recalls. "I did ask him later, 'Why did you only give me two minutes?' He said, 'If you want to be a Legionnaire, you're going to have to do what we did to earn the right to do that.'"

Harris took that challenge, serving 22 years in the Army and Army Reserve. She's also blazed trails in North Carolina, serving as the first female commander in Post 157's 83-year history and later as the first female department commander.

Harris now belongs to Post 124 in Apex, which she helped revitalize while serving as district commander in 2007 and 2008. After deploying to the Persian Gulf with her husband, leaving behind two small children, Harris gained a greater appreciation of the need for support for military families.

"The experience we went through ... that's why I think it's of the utmost importance that we do that," she says. "(The American Legion) is a family. It was one to me, and it has helped my family. (As Legionnaires), we've been there, we know what it's like, and we know what we need to do to help."

— Steve B. Brooks

BRANCH OF SERVICE Army Reserve (1979-1980 and 1994-2001), Army (1980-1994)

RANK Sergeant

MILITARY JOBS Communications specialist/unit dispatcher

AMERICAN LEGION POST Post 157, Raleigh, N.C. (1998-2009), Post 124, Cary, N.C. (2009-present)

YEARS IN THE LEGION 19

LEGION ACTIVITIES

- Alternate National Executive Committeeman (2016-present)
- National Internal Affairs Commission member (2013-present)
- Department commander (2013-2014)
- National Legion College facilitator (2009, 2010 and 2013)
- National Children & Youth Commission consultant (2007-2013)
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Overturn DACA program



SUPPORT

Rep. Lou Barletta, R-Pa.

■ Barletta is a member of the House Homeland Security Committee.

President Trump's action to place a deadline on ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was a key step to restoring the constitutional balance regarding immigration enforcement. When President Obama unilaterally, and illegally, granted amnesty to hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants, he improperly created more competition for U.S. workers and legal immigrants who are already finding it difficult to get work. They should not have to suffer from others butting in line who broke the law to enter this country.

Obama's unilateral action set the legitimacy and nonpartisan functionality of immigration law on shaky ground. By putting such decisions back in the hands of Congress, Trump put the United States first and made it clear that no president has the authority to create immigration law.

Trump's move to re-establish immigration law is a victory for the forgotten American worker and legal immigrants who followed the rule of law to become part of our nation. Too often in this debate, media and politicians focus on the person who came here illegally. No one talks about how illegal immigration depresses U.S. worker and legal immigrant wages and threatens jobs.

We cannot have a conversation about those who are in our country illegally before we stop the flow of illegal immigration. We are dealing with this problem today because Congress and previous administrations have failed to enforce our laws and secure our borders. Trump is giving Congress an opportunity to pass significant interior enforcement and border security measures to protect U.S. workers and the legal immigration system. Enforcement comes first.



OPPOSE

Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester, D-Del.

■ Blunt Rochester serves on the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are the cornerstones of our democracy and identity. It's the very idea of America that has attracted our servicemembers to defend our freedoms and values, as well as attracted millions the world

over seeking out a better life in our country. DREAMers who participate in the DACA program and serve in our armed forces are the latest in a long line of immigrants who have devoted their lives to service of our nation.

They represent the best of

our values and the best of who we are.

The decision to end this valuable program not only sends the wrong message to nearly 800,000 DREAMers, but it unnecessarily burdens our economy. In Delaware we would lose \$88 million annually, and our nation's economy is forecast to lose \$460 billion in GDP over the next decade if we fail to renew DACA.

This program was created by executive order because of Congress' inability to work together, but now is the time to put partisanship aside and do our jobs. As an equal branch in government, it's vitally important that Congress step in to prevent DREAMers from being deported and torn away from their families. The U.S. government has a duty to uphold its promises, which is why I'm deeply disappointed in President Trump's decision to terminate DACA after he promised to treat DREAMers with "heart."

I've had the honor of meeting DREAMers across the nation. I've been moved by their stories and dedication to this place they call home. For many, it's the only home they've ever known. Some have chosen to fight and defend the nation they love, but all of them best represent the values that exemplify what it means to be an American.

THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) initiative allowed thousands of illegal residents to avoid deportation and apply for work permits. Supporters said DACA protected people who contribute to the U.S. economy and society.

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GREAT PAINS

A sharp rise in painkiller use has experts concerned.

BY JUDITH HURLEY

Daily pain is something many seniors know a thing or two about. According to the National Institutes of Health, about 50 percent of older adults living on their own, and 75 percent of those residing in assisted living facilities and nursing homes, suffer from chronic pain. Common causes are arthritis, cancer, gout, diabetes-related nerve disease, postherpetic nerve pain (pain following shingles) and cardiovascular disease.

Undertreated pain can have significant consequences. In addition to physical limitations and disability, it can lead to sleep deprivation, depression, anxiety and social isolation. Although the need to manage chronic pain is widely recognized, the steep rise in the use of opioid painkillers in the last two decades has health experts concerned.

Between 1999 and 2015, sales of opioids in the United States tripled, and there was a parallel increase in opioid addiction and overdose.

Between 2014 and 2015, deaths from opioid overdose rose by 15.6 percent.

Opioid misuse isn't limited to younger adults. In 2015, about 12 million Medicare beneficiaries – nearly one in three – received a prescription for an opioid painkiller. At the top of the list the list were oxycodone (Oxycontin), hydrocodone-acetaminophen (a generic substitute for Vicodin), oxycodone-acetaminophen (a generic substitute for Percocet) and fentanyl. On average, these patients received five opioid prescriptions during the year. That high level of use has raised red flags.

"We've seen an alarming increase in the number of people 65 and older who required emergency department or hospital care related to opioid overuse," says Mary Carter, associate professor and gerontology program director at Towson University.

In a study of U.S. emergency department visits by adults 65

See **PAINS** on page 16

Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their physicians when they have health problems.

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Amount Americans spent on buying candy for Valentine's Day in 2017, according to the National Retail Federation Source: ABC News

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55-59	\$15.28	\$11.50	\$24.79	\$18.50	\$48.58	\$36.00	\$119.96	\$88.50
60-64	\$18.50	\$13.75	\$30.17	\$22.25	\$59.33	\$43.50	\$146.83	\$107.25
65-69	\$22.08	\$17.05	\$36.13	\$27.75	\$71.25	\$54.50	\$176.63	\$134.75
70-74	\$29.53	\$22.30	\$48.54	\$36.50	\$96.08	\$72.00	\$238.71	\$178.50
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Improving health, one meal at a time

Across the country, veterans like Fran Kondorf of Chicago are learning a skill that helps them live healthier lives every day. Kondorf is an active participant in VA's Healthy Teaching Kitchen (HTK) program, which educates veterans and their families on the basics of eating well.

Through in-person cooking lessons at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago, Kondorf has benefited from the expertise of registered dietitian Allison Chikos. Like other nutrition educators throughout the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Chikos wants to help participants make healthy, economical food choices while teaching easy ways to prepare fresh foods. "You learn different things that you can do that are healthy – simple tips. I enjoy them," Kondorf says.

The Chicago-based HTK is just one of 125 programs led by Nutrition and Food Services (NFS) departments at VHA facilities throughout the country. Chikos finds cooking classes to be an especially effective way to educate patients.

"I serve as a liaison between veterans and their doctors, demonstrating easy ways that they can lower blood pressure by limiting their salt intake, or manage diabetes by decreasing the amount of sugar in meals," she says. "They get to experience firsthand how simple and delicious healthy cooking can be."

She adds, "My No. 1 priority is that the food tastes good. It doesn't matter how nutritious it is if no one is going to eat it."

If you're interested in participating in the HTK program or other nutrition education services, contact your local VHA's NFS department. You can also go to www.nutrition.va.gov/healthy_teaching_kitchen.asp to download Yummy Benefits cookbooks, or to access healthy cooking videos through VA's YouTube channel. In addition, Chikos' cooking classes are streamed online and posted on the Chicago VA's Facebook page.

– Michelle Gibeault Traub

PAINS *continued from page 14*

and older, Carter found that visits related primarily to misuse of drugs increased by 78 percent between 2006 and 2012.

"A significant portion of those visits – 11 percent – was for opioids," she says.

Nationally, hospitalizations for opioid overuse in adults 65 and older increased by 9 percent a year between 1993 and 2012, nearly twice the increase seen in younger adults.

Simply being older contributes to the problem. Opioids are more potent in older people and their effects last longer, largely because the liver and kidneys metabolize and excrete drugs less efficiently. In addition, sedation and confusion are common opioid side effects. Seniors who take several prescription medications may confuse their pills or forget they have already taken their scheduled doses. Consuming alcohol or taking other drugs that depress the central nervous system, such as anti-anxiety medications and some sleep aids, further increases the risk for an opioid overdose.

Another problem is multiple prescriptions. After a hospital stay, it's not uncommon for someone to go from the hospital to a rehabilitation facility to home, receiving more than one opioid prescription along the way.

"We don't have a good way to track drugs from pharmacy to pharmacy to make sure old prescriptions are discontinued," Carter says. "Whether intentionally or by mistake, someone might be taking more than initially prescribed, the new dose plus the old dose."

Establishing a "family care team" is one way to ensure an older person's safety, says Jane Wolf Frances, a Los Angeles social worker and psychotherapist who specializes in family-care issues. For example, children can accompany parents to doctor visits, record what's being said and ask the doctor questions the parent might not think to ask. They can keep an eye on the medicine cabinet to check for duplicate or outdated prescriptions. Exploring non-drug alternatives for managing pain, such as physical therapy and exercise, and looking at the person's entire situation make an enormous difference, Frances says.

"Older people may not only be in a lot of physical pain, but have psychological pain from the loss of a loved one or the loss of their independence," she adds. "Get them involved in activities that they love with family and friends. Help them create a plan and purpose in life."

Health professionals aren't the only ones concerned about opioid misuse.

"Older adults themselves worry about addiction and may undertreat their pain at home, but that can cause their pain to spike," Carter says. "We really need to completely rethink how we can help older adults who are struggling with pain, multiple health conditions and other issues."

Judith Hurley is a freelance journalist who specializes in science and medicine.

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5 African-American Historic Sites to Visit

Put baseball, Motown and Tuskegee on your short list.

BY LYN METTLER

Across the country, hundreds of historic sites showcase black Americans' cultural contributions and civil-rights struggles. In honor of National African-American History Month, here are five stops to educate and inspire you.

NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREEDOM CENTER The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati tells stories of the past and present struggles for freedom; in addition to educating visitors about slavery, it describes ongoing efforts to eradicate human trafficking. Inside, you'll see an actual slave pen used during the slave trade, handcrafted quilts and art, as well as interactive exhibits.

MOTOWN MUSEUM The Motown Museum north of downtown Detroit is located in the original Motown Record Studio known as Hitsville U.S.A., started by Berry Gordy in 1959 with just \$800. Stand in Studio A, where famous musicians like the Temptations and Marvin Gaye recorded hits. Display items include linoleum worn from the shoes of artists who recorded there and the piano played on the Jackson 5 track "I Want You Back."



National Underground Railroad Freedom Center AP

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE Considered Atlanta's top tourist destination, the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site on Auburn Avenue includes King's birth home, Ebenezer Baptist Church (where he served as pastor), the "Behold" monument, and the final resting places of King and his wife.

TUSKEGEE AIRMEN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE In Tuskegee, Ala., learn about the men who were part of an Army Air Corps experiment to see if blacks could fly military aircraft. Check out two hangars housing museums with aircraft, see how the Tuskegee Airmen were trained, and hear about their battles against discrimination.

NEGRO LEAGUES BASEBALL MUSEUM Located in Kansas City's 18th & Vine historic district, the museum is filled with photographs, film clips and memorabilia. A highlight is the Field of Legends, which features life-size bronze statues of 12 legendary players on a baseball diamond.

Lyn Mettler is a freelance travel writer who blogs at GotoTravelGal.com.



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Choice, caregiver legislation sidelined

BY TOM PHILPOTT

The first session of the 115th Congress ended with a familiar mix of bitter partisanship and crippling procrastination, so much so that key pieces of legislation supported by The American Legion and other veterans service organizations (VSOs) failed to clear the House or Senate.

One delayed initiative would replace the problem-plagued Veterans Choice program, which, to control costs, limits access to private-sector care to veterans who face commutes farther than 40 miles to a VA primary-care provider or waits longer than 30 days to schedule a VA appointment.

A second initiative that lost momentum was legislation to expand eligibility for post-9/11 caregiver benefits to older generations of veterans and caregivers.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., lead sponsor of caregiver expansion language included in the Senate omnibus veterans package, was angry and disappointed. “I find it so wrong that Republican leaders dedicated most of the past month jamming through a partisan bill to give more tax breaks to the wealthiest Americans, while a bipartisan bill to help veterans ... was put on the backburner,” she said. Murray urged colleagues in the new year “to take up this legislation as soon as possible so we can deliver much-needed care to millions of veterans across the country.”

As 2017 began, VA promised a plan to replace Choice, and veterans’ affairs committees seemed primed to act on it. As the year ended, Congress had failed to pass a budget three months into a new fiscal year or any appropriations bills to fund key federal departments. A third stopgap funding bill, or continuing budget resolution (CR), was prepared to keep the government open until Jan. 19. With CRs in effect, agency budgets – including VA – stay frozen at previous-year levels and no new programs can be started.

In November and December, veterans advocates couldn’t overcome conflicting priorities on Capitol Hill and a crowded year-end legislative schedule caused by earlier inaction. However, there was progress on Choice reform at committee level and, by senators, on expanding caregiver eligibility.

The Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee approved the Caring for Our Veterans Act of 2017 (S. 2193), including a Choice replacement plan designed by VA Secretary David Shulkin and staff with feedback from the Legion and other VSOs. The plan would scrap wait time and mileage triggers for automatic access to non-VA health care. Instead, it directs that VA-enrolled patients be assigned to a VA primary-

care provider responsible for all referrals, including to non-VA care, based on clinical needs and after consulting with patients. The same plan would direct VA to build out high-performing civilian provider networks across the country, consolidate seven “community care” programs down to one, strengthen partnerships with non-VA providers and state and other federal departments, and

improve payment processes and information sharing between VA and private-sector providers.

S. 2193 embraced Murray’s plan to improve caregiver benefits and expand them, in phases, to older generations. The committee voted 14-1 to forward the bill to the full Senate for a vote, where it got bogged down. The bill’s cost was \$56 billion over five years, including \$3.4 billion for caregiver expansion, with no clear path to pay for it.

In late December, the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee approved a Choice replacement plan (H.R. 4242) in a hearing that ended in a straight party-line vote. The bill has some features veterans advocates oppose and is silent on caregiver benefits. But Democrats who helped shape the bill voted against it in protest over the risk that VA budgets, including for non-VA health care, will face budget caps in 2018 and beyond. Republican leaders, they charged, plan to impose the sort of fiscal discipline on VA and other domestic spending that they ignored in passing a \$1.5 trillion tax relief bill.

“We are cutting taxes and putting the burden on those who served,” said Rep. Mark Takano, D-Calif., predicting a “budgetary straitjacket for veterans care over the next decade.”

Tom Philpott has been covering military personnel and veterans issues for more than 40 years.



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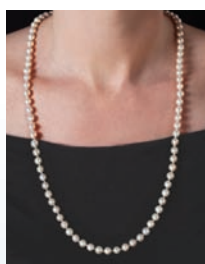
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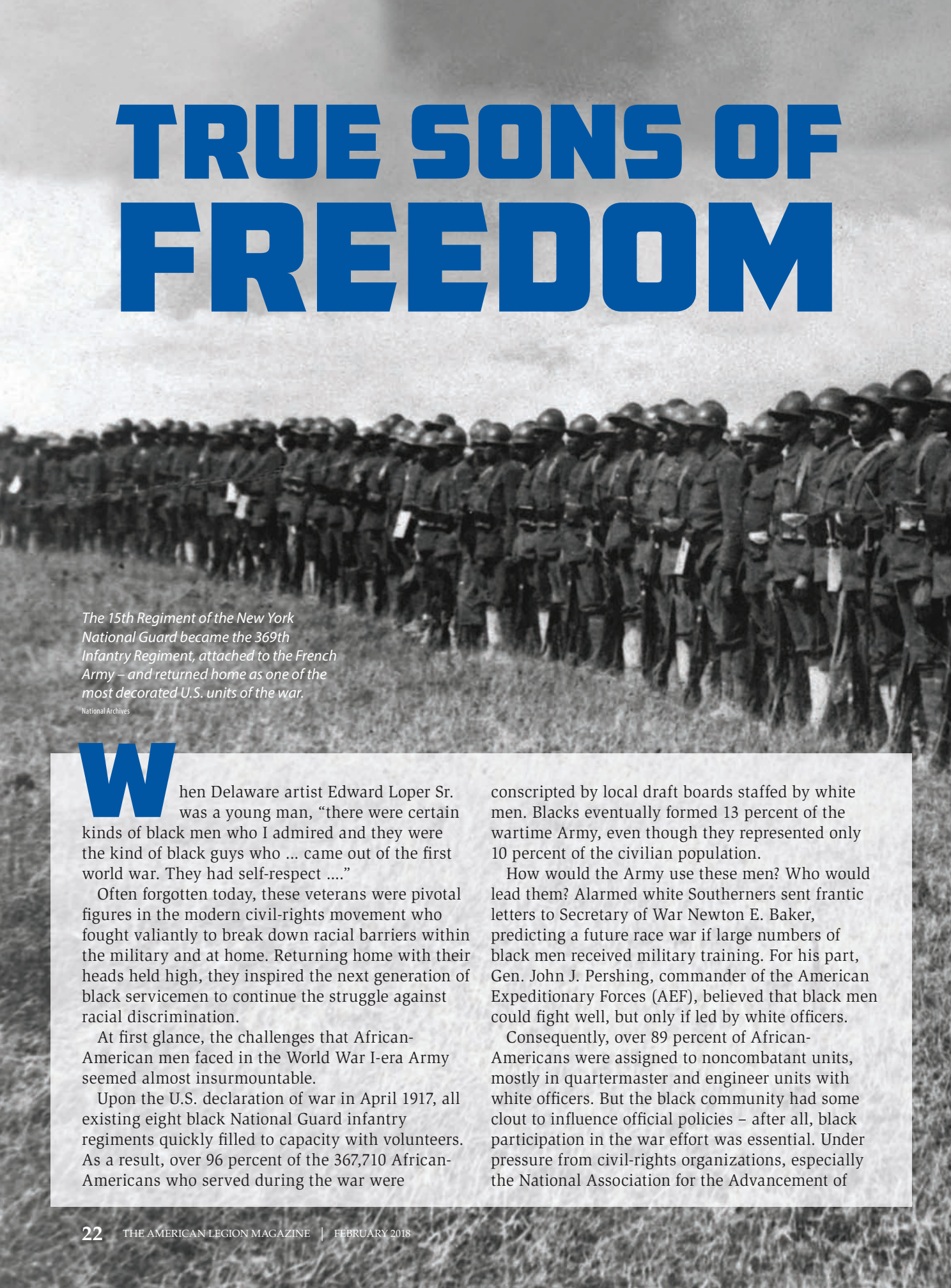


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The 15th Regiment of the New York National Guard became the 369th Infantry Regiment, attached to the French Army – and returned home as one of the most decorated U.S. units of the war.

National Archives

When Delaware artist Edward Loper Sr. was a young man, “there were certain kinds of black men who I admired and they were the kind of black guys who ... came out of the first world war. They had self-respect”

Often forgotten today, these veterans were pivotal figures in the modern civil-rights movement who fought valiantly to break down racial barriers within the military and at home. Returning home with their heads held high, they inspired the next generation of black servicemen to continue the struggle against racial discrimination.

At first glance, the challenges that African-American men faced in the World War I-era Army seemed almost insurmountable.

Upon the U.S. declaration of war in April 1917, all existing eight black National Guard infantry regiments quickly filled to capacity with volunteers. As a result, over 96 percent of the 367,710 African-Americans who served during the war were

conscripted by local draft boards staffed by white men. Blacks eventually formed 13 percent of the wartime Army, even though they represented only 10 percent of the civilian population.

How would the Army use these men? Who would lead them? Alarmed white Southerners sent frantic letters to Secretary of War Newton E. Baker, predicting a future race war if large numbers of black men received military training. For his part, Gen. John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF), believed that black men could fight well, but only if led by white officers.

Consequently, over 89 percent of African-Americans were assigned to noncombatant units, mostly in quartermaster and engineer units with white officers. But the black community had some clout to influence official policies – after all, black participation in the war effort was essential. Under pressure from civil-rights organizations, especially the National Association for the Advancement of

The experience of African-American soldiers in World War I shaped the struggle for racial justice.

BY JENNIFER D. KEENE



Colored People (NAACP), the War Department agreed to create one complete black combatant division, the 92nd Division, and melded the National Guard units into four infantry regiments to form a “provisional” 93rd Division. Baker also authorized one black officer training camp at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, to provide company-grade officers for the 92nd Division.

The officer training camp attracted top students from black colleges like Howard University and Morehouse College, men dubbed the “Talented Tenth” by educator and civil-rights activist W.E.B. Du Bois. In October 1917, the Colored Officers Training Camp graduated 106 captains, 329 first lieutenants and 204 second lieutenants. These men knew that white officers would scrutinize their every move, magnifying any error as evidence that black men were incapable of leadership. Indeed, the 92nd Division began the war with 82 percent of its officer corps staffed by African-Americans, but by the end of the war efficiency boards had decreased their representation to 58 percent.

The fates of the 92nd and 93rd divisions differed quite dramatically.



Lt. James Reese Europe and his band wowed France with their original music, and he returned home a hero in 1919. Library of Congress



Black soldiers fought a war within a war, petitioning for better treatment in the U.S. military. They also contrasted the racism they encountered within the Army to the respect and kindness given them by the people of France. Getty

Pershing “loaned” the 93rd Division to the French, who were happy to have Americans bolster their forces. The 93rd amassed an illustrious combat record, fighting in the summer of 1918 in the battles of Champagne-Marne and Aisne-Marne.

The 369th Infantry Regiment, nicknamed the Harlem Hellfighters, served at the front for 191 days, the longest of any U.S. regiment. The 369th secured a critical victory in the opening days of the Meuse-Argonne offensive when it captured a key railroad junction near Séchault on Sept. 30, 1918. Success cost the regiment dearly, however. Horace Pippin (see page 30) was among 851 casualties taken during the assault. The Meuse-Argonne was an American-led coalition campaign, but the 369th had no qualms about fighting in the battle under French command. These men returned home with citations from French generals and Croix de Guerre medals attesting to their bravery and skill.

By contrast, the 92nd Division remained within the AEF, where racism thwarted it at every turn. The division’s 20,000 men trained in seven different locations stateside, hampering its preparation. Training conditions improved in France, but not quickly enough. When the inexperienced 368th Infantry Regiment stumbled at the beginning of the Meuse-Argonne offensive (one of many blunders made by AEF units in the battle’s opening days), the division’s white officers immediately shifted the blame to their fellow black officers. The entire division was subsequently removed from the line

until the final days of the war, when it acquitted itself well. Nonetheless, the difficulties of the 368th became the example cited repeatedly in the postwar period to smear the reputation of the entire division.

Yet other memories were taking shape within training camps and French villages, on ships and battlefields. Some black soldiers told their stories only to their families. Others testified publicly in letters and petitions to government officials, black reporters and civil-rights activists. Rather than waiting until they left the Army to begin their fight for civil rights, these stories demonstrated that many African-American soldiers engaged in that struggle from the moment they put on the uniform.

First Lt. Rayford Logan was one such soldier. Logan began waging his own private war against racism the day he got his commission. Dubbed a troublemaker, when he received a head injury Logan was put behind the lines to supervise noncombatant troops. If Army authorities believed this would silence Logan, they were mistaken. Before long, he was organizing soldiers to demand their rights before courts-martial – thus beginning his lifelong commitment to the civil-rights movement.

Black soldiers found other inventive ways to fight this war within the war. They staged work slowdowns, ignored orders restricting their contact with French civilians, challenged white authority openly, wrote individual letters of protest and signed petitions in collective efforts to better their conditions within the military.

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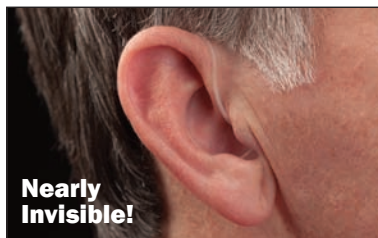
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Three unidentified African-American soldiers pose in front of a U.S. flag and painted backdrop circa 1917. Blacks made up 13 percent of the wartime Army, though they represented only 10 percent of the population. Library of Congress



And they told their stories – stories meant to inspire pride and a political awakening.

Nearly every black soldier who went to France could tell a story illustrating French civilians' kindness, respect and friendship toward African-Americans. "These French people don't bother with no color line business," one soldier wrote to his mother. "As for myself, I have never before experienced what it meant to be really free – to taste liberty – in a phrase to be a man," declared Lt. Osceola McKaine. "I love the French." For the first time in their lives, they truly felt like Americans.

Music helped solidify the mutual regard between African-Americans and French civilians. Filled with professional musicians, black regimental bands enthralled French audiences by infusing military songs with ragtime syncopation. The renowned bandmaster James Reese Europe toured France with the Harlem Hellfighters band, performing for French peasants in town squares and government officials in gilded concert halls. The band, one reporter noted, "filled France with jazz," a welcome tonic to the daily anxieties of living in a war-torn country.

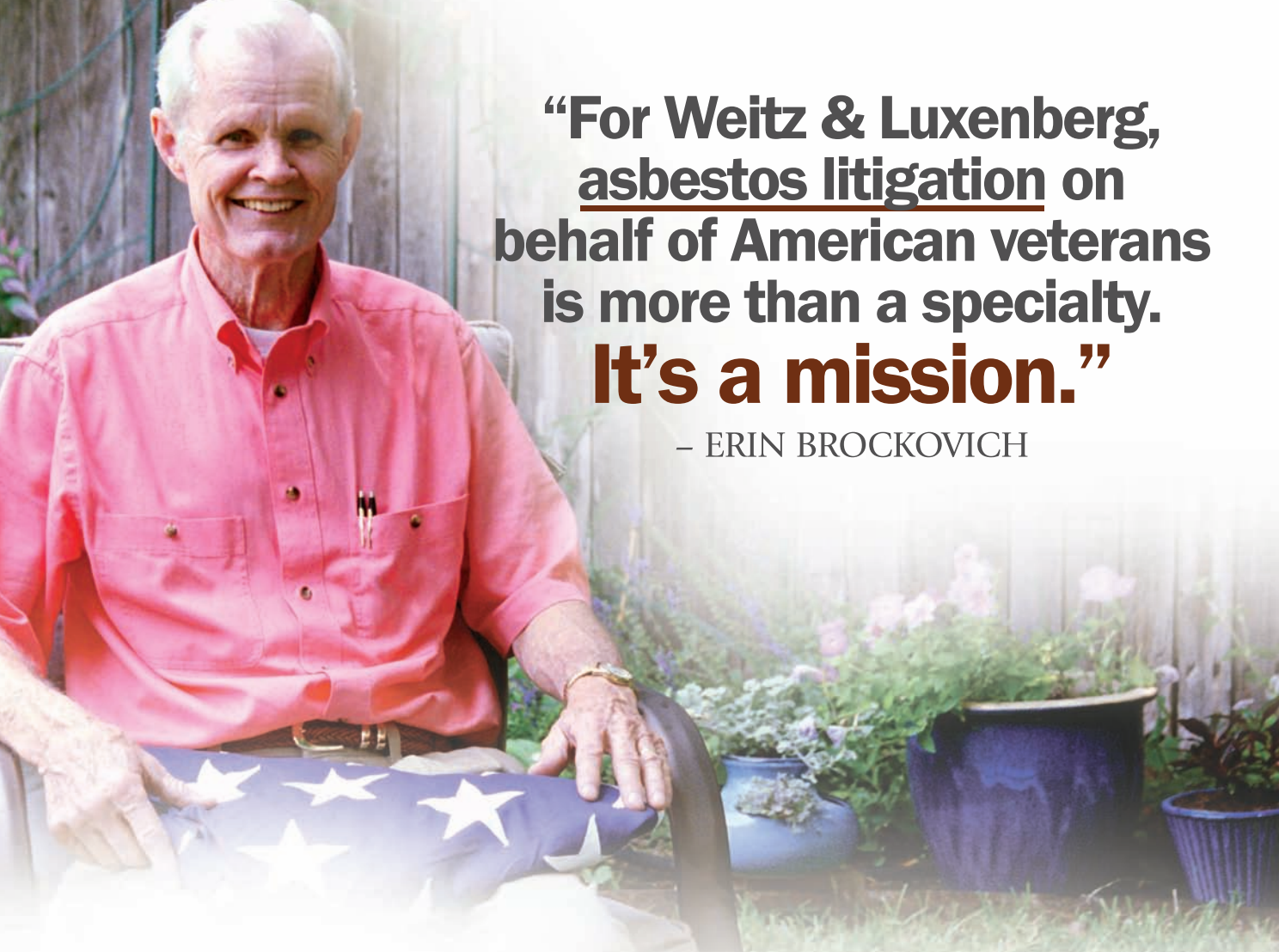
These stories contrasted sharply with those that detailed the daily harassment and humiliation of serving in a Jim Crow Army. Charles Houston later recounted the moment when he made the decision to dedicate his life to the civil-rights movement. Houston earned a commission as a field artillery officer, and his success mastering a highly skilled curriculum subjected Houston to an even greater amount of what he described as "hate and scorn" from white officers. But it took seeing a once-proud

black sergeant, wrongly convicted and sentenced to hard labor, shuffling in chains and under white guard, to convince Houston "that if luck was with me and I got through this war, I would study law and use my time fighting for men who could not strike back." He chose to tell his story in 1940, on the cusp of another world war, so "this generation of Negro boys may have their eyes opened" before they went off to fight in a war for democracy.

Stories of resistance circulated widely among black veterans from all walks of life. Sgt. Charles Isum, for instance, wrote a detailed letter to Du Bois in 1919, recounting how he had been arrested while attending a wedding hosted by a French family for purportedly violating a divisional anti-fraternization order. Two things made this rather typical experience of racial discrimination noteworthy. First, the entire village had tried to intervene on his behalf. But perhaps most importantly, he had stood his ground in the subsequent legal proceedings and prevailed because "I was aware of my rights."

Coming home with an honorable discharge, Isum would need all the self-respect he could muster. Civil-rights leader James Weldon Johnson dubbed the summer of 1919 "Red Summer" for the wave of racially motivated assaults that engulfed the United States. Deadly race rioting ravaged 25 cities, including Chicago and Washington, D.C., and a postwar lynching frenzy counted 10 veterans among the victims.

The violence reinforced a rising determination within black communities to fight back, with returning veterans leading the way. Many veterans



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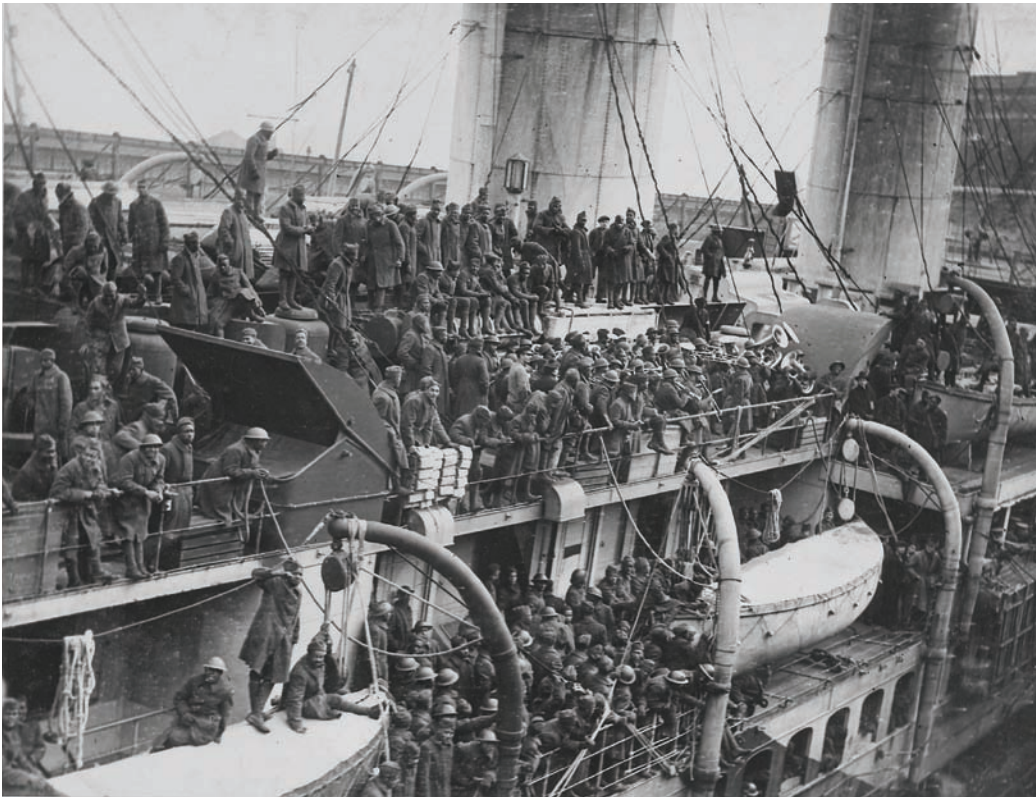
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Crowded along the decks and balconies of the French liner La France, dozens of African-American soldiers return to the United States after service abroad. In the decades ahead, black veterans led the way in the fight against racial discrimination. Getty

joined the NAACP, and several became influential leaders within the civil-rights movement. Houston, for instance, went on to devise the NAACP's legal strategy for challenging segregation in the courts, which culminated in the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* case that ruled "separate but equal" schools unconstitutional.

Ensuring fair and equal access to veterans benefits was another critical part of the burgeoning civil-rights crusade. Wherever possible, black veterans joined The American Legion – usually as members of segregated posts. Attempting to organize a "colored post" in Baton Rouge, La., a group of black veterans stressed that as Legionnaires they would know "just what the Government is doing for us in the way of benefits for ourselves, our wives, mothers and children." Chartering decisions were made by the states, however, and some, including Louisiana, refused to sanction black posts. Nonetheless, by 1925, black veterans had successfully established 100 African-American posts nationwide, naming them in memory of comrades listed among the 773 African-Americans killed in action during the war.

In 1940, with another war looming on the horizon, World War I veterans turned their attention back to the military. Houston and Logan joined forces with others to lobby for improved racial policies and expanded opportunities within the military. Forming the Committee on the Participation of Negroes in the National Defense Program, they testified before Congress and petitioned President

Franklin D. Roosevelt to prevent a repeat of World War I-era discriminatory practices.

Bowing to their demands, Roosevelt pledged that black men would not be overdrafted or excluded from the air service, paving the way for the creation of the Tuskegee Airmen. The Army had only five black officers (including three chaplains), a result of its repeated claim that commissioning black officers in World War I had been a mistake. Consequently, activists pressed hard to secure a promise from Roosevelt that the military would again train black officers, albeit within a still-segregated military.

The centennial of American participation in World War I offers a perfect moment to remember how the war's black veterans forged the path that ultimately led to desegregation of the armed forces in 1948. This major victory for the modern civil-rights movement forever altered the meaning of military service. Today the U.S. Armed Forces proudly guarantee equal opportunity to all servicemembers, a legacy of the World War I generation who fought with courage and determination for the right to serve their nation with honor and dignity. 🌿

Jennifer D. Keene is a professor of history at Chapman University and president of the Society of Military History. She is the author of several books on U.S. involvement in World War I, including "Doughboys, the Great War and the Remaking of America" "World War I: The American Soldier Experience" and "The United States and the First World War."

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'We were good, good enough to go anyplace'

The Great War, Horace Pippin wrote, "brought out all ... the art in me." A 29-year-old noncommissioned officer in the 369th Infantry Regiment (the famed Harlem Hellfighters), Pippin carried a sketchbook throughout the war. A self-made artist, Pippin crafted a visual record of his experiences in the trenches manning listening posts, conducting nighttime raids, enduring gas attacks, and in hand-to-hand combat with German soldiers.



Horace Pippin's *"The End of the War: Starting Home,"* circa 1930

Photo courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art

Pippin's war came to an end in late September 1918 during the assault on Séchault. Shot in the right shoulder and losing blood, he lay helpless for hours in a shell hole. His agony only increased when a German sniper killed a passing French soldier whose body fell right on top of Pippin (he later recalled being thankful for the bread and water the man carried). Finally rescued, Pippin returned home with a nearly useless right arm, a French Croix de Guerre and his sketches gone. Pippin survived on a \$22.50 monthly disability allowance and worked only sporadically, but he was not a recluse. By all accounts an affable man with a keen sense of humor, Pippin joined the all-black Nathan Holmes American Legion Post 362 in his hometown of West Chester, Pa., and served as post commander.

Pippin was proud of his wartime service in the 369th, noting that "every man in the Co. were a man." Initially detailed to lay railroad track behind the lines, the Harlem Hellfighters jumped at the chance to fight with the French army. "We were good, good enough to go anyplace," Pippin wrote. The viciousness of the war also produced strong, lasting memories. "I have seen men die in all forms and places," he later recalled.

To tell his wartime story, at age 40 Pippin began sketching and painting again. For three years he worked on "The End of the War: Starting Home," applying and sculpting nearly 100 layers of paint to create a textured, visually dramatic tableau of trench warfare. The result was a masterpiece that combined the feelings of pride and horror that defined his war experience.

In the painting, African-American soldiers remain steadfast and disciplined as they advance on German lines. Unrelenting violence saturates the canvas as airplanes crash, bombs explode, and hand-carved miniature guns,

tanks and grenades adorn the frame.

The floodgates had opened. Pippin's subsequent war paintings offer an unflinching glimpse of the harsh, brutal and sometimes poetic aspects of the war. He no longer had his wartime sketches, "but I can never forget suffering, and I will never forget sunset ... so I came home with all of it in my mind and I Paint from it to Day." Pippin painted the terrifying moment when mustard gas descended on troops tormented by

tight-fitting gas masks, the desolate terrain left lifeless by constant artillery bombardments, the mesmerizing feats of aerial pilots engaged in dogfights, and black soldiers' direct encounters with Germans.

For Pippin, combat in World War I was the defining moment of his life, and his paintings are among the best, if not the best, by any American artists of the conflict. In 1937 he was discovered, and became well-known in artistic circles. Memories of his wartime service continued to arouse feelings of both pride and anguish. In 1945, he applied and retroactively received a Purple Heart that he wore to patriotic parades and ceremonies. His bouts of "the blues" continued, however. In 1943, Pippin completed "Mr. Prejudice," a painting that revealed another reason for his distress – the failed promise of America's wars for democracy to improve race relations at home. In this painting, full-fledged participation by African-Americans in their nation's defense is not enough to stop the powerful guardians of white supremacy from cracking the V (symbolizing victory) in half.

Pippin, a deeply religious man, nonetheless remained hopeful. The "Holy Mountain" series of four allegorical paintings "came to my mind because the whole world is in such trouble, and in reading the Bible (Isaiah XI-6) it says that there will be peace in the land. If a man knows nothing but hard times he will paint them, for he must be true to himself, but even that man may have a dream, an ideal – and 'Holy Mountain' is my answer to such dreaming."

In 1946, a year after writing these words, Pippin died of a stroke at 58. His memories of World War I stayed with him until the end, along with his commitment to paint "exactly the way it is and exactly the way I see it."

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The Sacrifices of Sequestration

It's time for a cost-benefit analysis on the Budget Control Act.

BY ALAN W. DOWD

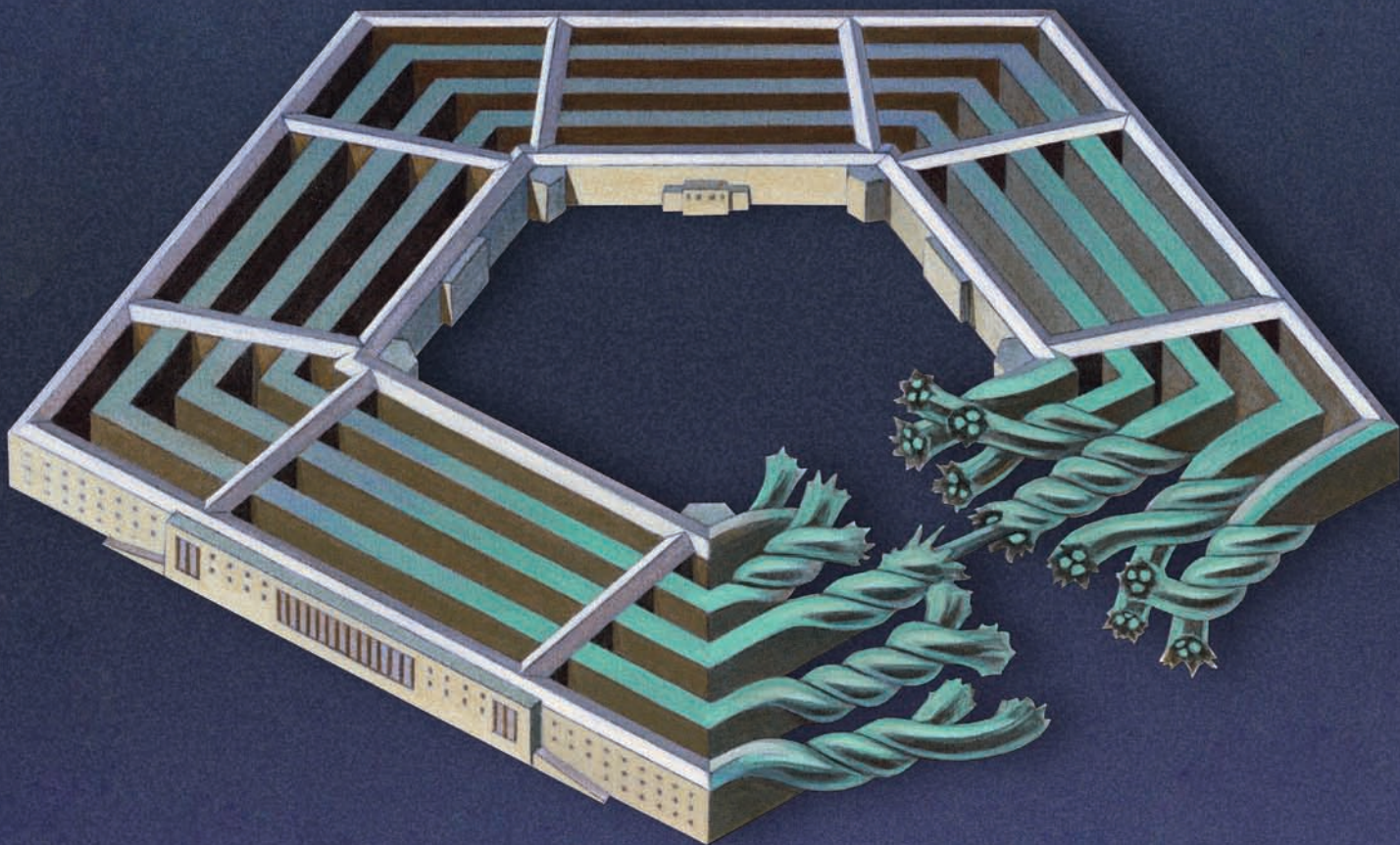


Illustration Source

The Budget Control Act (BCA) of 2011 aimed to address the deficit crisis spawned by both the Great Recession and Washington's efforts to contain it. Those efforts, spanning the end of the Bush administration and beginning of the Obama administration, mushroomed federal spending from \$2.98 trillion in 2008 to \$3.72 trillion by 2010 – a 25 percent spike in just two years. Washington's spending binge – along with diminished federal tax hauls due to the recession – created a record-setting \$1.4 trillion deficit in 2009. In fact, between 2009 and 2012, the deficit surpassed \$1 trillion each year.

As a goad to action, the BCA included a trigger for across-the-board cuts of \$1 trillion – spread over several years and divided between defense and certain domestic programs – in the event that a special House-Senate committee failed to meet a deficit-reduction goal of \$1.2 trillion. As Defense Secretary James Mattis observes, sequestration was “a mechanism meant to be so injurious to the military it would never go into effect.”

But the committee's members couldn't agree on how to reduce the deficit – tax increases, spending reductions, a little of both, a lot of both – and the automatic cuts known as sequestration kicked in.

Did sequestration work? To answer that question, let's do a cost-benefit analysis on the Budget Control Act – a CBA on the BCA.

PLUSES On the plus side of the ledger, the BCA slowed spending and bent the deficit downward from its stratospheric Great Recession heights: the deficit fell from \$1.3 trillion in 2011 to \$438 billion in 2015, and the deficit declined from 9.8 percent of GDP in 2009 – the largest share since 1945 – to 2.4 percent in 2015.

However, the deficit began to creep upward in 2016, jumping to \$584 billion – 3.1 percent of GDP. And the national debt, which represented 82 percent of GDP in 2009, hit 104 percent by 2016. In fact, the national debt has grown 34 percent since passage of the BCA.

“By all measures, the BCA has failed,” Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., concludes. “A law intended to reduce federal spending has cut defense and other discretionary budgets for five years without decreasing the federal debt.”

Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., agrees. Last year, he introduced a bill that concludes, “Sequestration was designed as a forcing mechanism for an agreement on a comprehensive deficit-reduction plan. It has failed to produce the intended results.”

Whatever the fiscal benefits of the BCA, they

came at an enormous cost to the U.S. military. Even before the sequester guillotine fell, the Pentagon had cut \$487 billion from projected spending, which means the Pentagon would lose nearly \$1 trillion in expected resources by the time sequestration had run its course.

Yes, Congress provided Band-Aid spending patches from time to time, and war-operations funding was protected from sequestration. But readiness, training, modernization, maintenance, weapons development and acquisition, and overall deterrent military strength all suffered because of sequestration.

“I can find nothing in the Budget Control Act,” Mattis recently told Congress, “that helps our national security.”

MINUSES Halfway through the sequestration ordeal, the results are not for the faint of heart.

Thanks in large part to sequestration, today's Air Force “is the smallest and oldest it has ever been,” an Air Force report to Congress grimly concludes.

In 2011, the Air Force had 333,370 active-duty airmen. By 2017, that number had fallen to 310,000.

In 2011, active-duty aircrews were flying 17.7 hours per crew per month; by 2016, that number had been slashed to 13.2 hours per month.

In 2013, the Air Force stood down 31 squadrons – including 13 combat-coded squadrons – due to sequestration's funding constraints.

Pressed by sequestration, the Air Force announced in 2014 plans to eliminate 500 planes from its inventory.

Commanders reported last March that they would likely run out of money to pay pilots to fly the last six weeks of fiscal 2017. Military.com adds that the Air Force is making do with “half-size squadrons.”

As for the age of today's Air Force: the B-2 entered service in 1993, the B-1B in 1986, the AWACS in 1977, the F-15 and A-10 in 1976, the KC-135 in 1957, the B-52 in 1955.

“The U.S. has not developed a new heavy bomber in three decades,” the Lexington Institute points out. Initial operational capability of the yet-to-be-built B-21 will not come until 2025. Until then, just 12 percent of America's aging bomber fleet will be able to penetrate and survive enemy air defenses.

In 2011, the Army's active-duty end strength was 566,000; by 2016, it had fallen to 476,000. The Army's active-duty force was 480,000 before 9/11.

In other words, sequestration left America with a smaller Army in a time of war than it fielded in a time of peace. As then-Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno remarked in 2013, “Throughout our nation’s history, the United States has drawn down military forces at the close of every war. This time, however, we are drawing down our Army not only before a war is over, but at a time where unprecedented uncertainty remains in the international security environment.”

Only 25 percent of the Army’s combat aviation brigades are ready to deploy. Worse, of the Army’s 58 brigade combat teams, “only three could be called upon to fight tonight in the event of a crisis,” reports Gen. Daniel Allyn, Army vice chief of staff.

As we enter an era marked by renewed great-power rivalry, the United States needs more of the Army’s unique deterrent capabilities – not less. Indeed, given the demands in Korea, Afghanistan, Iraq and Eastern Europe, it’s no surprise Army Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley wants an active-duty force of 540,000 to 550,000 soldiers.

Before sequestration, the Marine Corps fielded 202,100 active-duty personnel; by the end of 2016, there were only 184,000 Marines on active duty.

In 2014, half of the Marines’ fixed-wing fighters were grounded due to sequestration. By the end of 2016, only 41 percent of Marine aircraft were able to fly. About one-fourth – just 72 planes – of their F/A-18s were able to fly by the end of 2016.

“Approximately 80 percent of our aviation units lack the minimum number of ready basic aircraft for training, and we are significantly short ready aircraft for wartime requirements,” said Gen. Glenn Walters, the Corps’ assistant commandant.

The situation is so dire that, incredibly, Marine aviation units have been reduced to salvaging aircraft parts from museums to keep planes flying.

All told, 62 percent of non-deployed Marine units “are missing some kind of necessary equipment,” *Military Times* reports.

At the height of President Reagan’s rebuild, the Navy boasted 594 ships. Today’s Navy has only 277 active deployable ships. These numbers aren’t even close to America’s maritime needs.

“For us to meet what combatant commanders request,” according to former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert, “we need a Navy of 450 ships.” A government-funded study concludes the United States needs 14 aircraft carriers (the Navy has 10 operational), 160 cruisers and destroyers (the Navy has 84), and 72 attack submarines (the Navy has 52).

Fifty-three percent of Navy aircraft cannot fly. As *Defense News* reports, this is twice the historic average.

These shortfalls have real-world implications. When the Obama administration ordered warplanes from USS *George H.W. Bush* to blunt the ISIS blitzkrieg in 2014, Greenert admitted that “they stopped their sorties” over Afghanistan to do so.

Similarly, the Trump administration’s apparent sleight-of-hand with USS *Carl Vinson* during the North Korea crisis in spring 2017 – trying to make one carrier do the work of two – suggests the United States doesn’t have the carrier firepower it needs to dissuade foes, reassure allies and stabilize hotspots.

While today’s Navy may be more ambidextrous than its forerunners, deterrence is about presence. And the sequestration-era Navy lacks the assets to be present in all the places it’s needed.

RESOURCES Perhaps the biggest cost of sequestration is the message it sent to our troops, who were made to feel like liabilities that needed to be cut down to size rather than precious resources that needed to be nurtured. Their equipment got older, their numbers and assets grew smaller, their deployments became longer and more frequent, and their training and operations became more dangerous.

Surely, the rash of deadly midair and at-sea mishaps is a byproduct of sequestration. “On-duty accidents,” notes the American Enterprise Institute’s Mackenzie Eaglen, “have been the biggest killer of American servicemembers since 2014” – not the Islamic State, al-Qaeda or the Taliban.

Add it all up, and sequestration has had a devastating effect. By shrinking the reach, role and resources of the armed forces, sequestration has caused long-term damage to both the military and the nation it defends.

“No enemy in the field has done more to harm the readiness of our military than sequestration,” Mattis says.

“We have lost our advantage in key warfighting areas,” adds Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. James Dunford. He warns that “without sustained, sufficient and predictable funding ... we will lose our ability to project power.”

Speaking of funding, the Pentagon is not to blame for the budget-deficit mess. Washington could have eliminated the entire defense budget in 2012 – \$662 billion that year – and turned the



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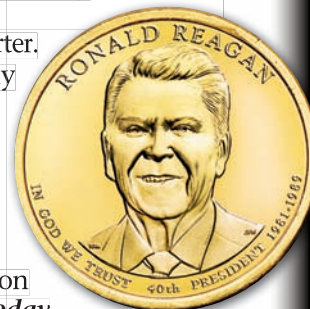
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Pentagon into a mega-mall, and we would still have faced a budget deficit of \$700 billion.

The Pentagon accounts for 17 percent of federal spending. Yet it was ordered to cough up half the budget savings mandated by sequestration, which led Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, to point out something too many policymakers fail to grasp: “The growth in the budget right now is in mandatory programs and particularly in health-care costs, Medicare, Medicaid, the children’s health program. That is what is driving the federal deficit. It is not defense.”

Indeed, as David Adesnik of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies details, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security now account for 48 percent of the federal budget (up from 40 percent in 2009 and 26 percent in 1974), while the Pentagon represents just 17 percent of federal spending (whittled down from 21 percent in 2009 and 30 percent in 1974).

PERSPECTIVE The costs of sequestration wouldn’t be all that worrisome if the world was at peace – if China weren’t asserting control over international airspace and waterways; if Russia weren’t reincorporating parts of the former Soviet Union, threatening NATO allies and reasserting itself in the Middle East; if North Korea weren’t testing nukes and long-range missiles; if Iran weren’t ambushing U.S. warships; if ISIS, al-Qaeda and the Taliban weren’t waging war on civilization; and if Russia and China weren’t building up their militaries. Russia’s military outlays have mushroomed by 125 percent since 2006, China’s by 150.9 percent since 2008.

These disparate threats explain why President Trump issued an executive order upon entering office pledging to rebuild the armed forces and directing the Pentagon to determine funding levels “necessary to improve readiness conditions and address risks to national security.” He unveiled a \$639 billion defense budget for 2018 (\$574.5 billion in baseline funding plus \$64.6 billion in special war funding) – well above the BCA’s sequester limits. He has vowed to increase the active-duty Army to 540,000 soldiers, deploy a 350-ship Navy, field 36 Marine battalions and equip the Air Force with 1,200 fighter aircraft.

The 2018 defense budget passed by Congress and signed by the president is \$700 billion (baseline and war-operations funding). But one budget cycle is not enough to repair the self-inflicted wounds of sequestration. “It took us years to get into this situation,” Mattis explains.

“It will require years of stable budgets and increased funding to get out of it.”

McCain calls for a baseline defense budget of \$662.3 billion in 2019, \$686.5 billion in 2020, \$720.9 billion in 2021 and \$740.5 billion in 2022. That may sound like a lot of money – after all, \$686.5 billion would equal 17.1 percent of a \$4 trillion federal budget and 3.6 percent of a \$19 trillion GDP – but to put those numbers into perspective, consider these comparisons:

■ In 1943 (World War II), the United States devoted 84.9 percent of federal outlays and 37 percent of GDP to defense.

■ In 1953 (the Korean War), it committed 69 percent of federal outlays and 14 percent of GDP to defense.

■ In 1968 (the Vietnam War), the United States invested 46 percent of federal spending and 9 percent of GDP in defense.

■ In 1984 (the Cold War’s pivotal final act), the United States spent 26.7 percent of federal outlays and 5.9 percent of GDP on defense.

Today, Washington is, in effect, asking America’s military to execute all these missions – to wage a global war on terror, fight open-ended regional battles and prosecute Cold War 2.0 – all at once. Yet according to the Congressional Research Service, federal outlays devoted to defense programs have fallen as a share of GDP in every year since the BCA’s enactment. In 2011, defense outlays were 4.5 percent of GDP; by 2016, they had shrunk to 3.1 percent.

COSTLY SAVINGS As the bipartisan gamble known as sequestration began to take its toll, Henry Kissinger identified the crux of the problem confronting Washington – and created by Washington – in this age of declining national-security spending and mushrooming national-security threats: the United States needs “a strategy-driven budget,” the dean of American statecraft explained, “not budget-driven strategy.”

A strategy-driven defense budget, by definition, would establish America’s strategic interests and build a military to defend those interests. A budget-driven strategy, on the other hand, puts spending priorities ahead of strategic interests and national-security needs.

Despite all its supposed savings, budget-driven strategy is costly – as we’ve learned in the wake of sequestration. 🌿

Alan W. Dowd is contributing editor for The American Legion Magazine.

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U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad is a 48-year member of The American Legion.

Photo by Rachel Mumme

U.S. Ambassador Terry Branstad, longtime Iowa Legionnaire, brings experience to one of the nation's most complex foreign-policy challenges.

BY HENRY HOWARD

Soon after Terry Branstad was elected governor of Iowa in 1982, he headed several delegations to China. High-ranking officials there made reciprocal visits to the Hawkeye State. On one of those trips, China's current president, Xi Jinping, paid a personal visit to Branstad, and they bonded.

"We had no idea that he would be the leader of China in the future," Branstad said. "He was then, basically, in charge of the Feed Association of Zhouzhuang."

Branstad, the longest-serving governor in U.S. history, reunited with Xi in 2011 in China. "He spends 45 minutes telling me how much he loves Iowa, and how that was his first trip to America, how well we treated him. He calls us old friends."

They reconnected again last summer, when President Trump nominated the former commander of American Legion Post 235 in Lake

Mills, Iowa, to serve as U.S. ambassador to China. The opportunity is the latest in a long career of service for Branstad, a Vietnam War Army veteran and former American Legion Baseball player.

"There's a certain camaraderie among people who serve their country," Branstad said after being nominated. "I served at a very difficult time. Vietnam was not a very popular time, and it wasn't easy. I'm very proud that I accepted a call to serve my country. I love this country, and I think The American Legion is a great patriotic organization. It's also a way to maintain those friendships and the camaraderie that was built up from time in the service."

Branstad spoke with *The American Legion Magazine* from Beijing last fall about some of the key issues he's confronting at a complex time, both in terms of global security and economy, in the U.S.-China relationship.



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China has made waves with the speed and scale of its terraforming program, building and claiming islands in the South China Sea. How should the United States strategically approach this issue, which an international court has deemed illegal?

The president (in November) completed a trip here to Asia. He was in Japan and Korea before coming to China, and then was in Vietnam and in Manila in the Philippines. He met with the Asian countries that have concerns. I know there are efforts being made to make sure there is no further militarization of the islands in the South China Sea. The United States also has continued to conduct a freedom-of-navigation of our Navy vessels through that area on a continuous basis.

China is growing its military strength and presence, including a base in Djibouti and possibly Pakistan. What is the most appropriate way for the United States to address these developments?

As China's regional and international interests grow more complex, I expect that the People's Liberation Army's international engagement will continue to expand. China recently completed construction of the military base in Djibouti. This initiative and others reflect and amplify China's growing influence. We recognize China's contributions to African peace and security through multilateral mechanisms, such as deployment of peacekeepers in regions affected by strife and Chinese involvement in counterpiracy efforts off the Horn of Africa. More broadly, the United States and China engage in military discussions to deepen substantive cooperation on issues where our interests converge and provide both sides opportunities to express mutual concern and avoid conflict where our interests are divergent. I was with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Gen. (Joseph) Dunford, when he visited China. The United States and China have many difficult issues where we will not necessarily have the same perspectives, but we share a commitment to working through difficulties. I was encouraged with the military-to-military contacts, and we think that continues to be very important to avoid miscalculations.



As governor, Branstad worked closely to build trade relations with China and Xi Jinping long before Xi became Chinese president. Photo by Rachel Mumme

The trade deficit has been an issue for some time. The president has already reached some trade deals with China, including the export of U.S. beef. What's next?

I am pleased that, after 14 years, one of the first things that happened after I got here was the Chinese market opening to American beef. There has been a 25 percent increase in beef exports this year, and China has certainly played a role in that. But we sell a lot of soybeans and a lot of pork here in the Chinese market as well. We are hopeful that we are going to see some reduction in the tariffs on ethanol.

During the president's visit, there were \$250 billion worth of contracts and MOUs

(memorandums of understanding) signed in different areas. One of the areas that is really growing is energy and the sale of liquid natural gas. The governor of Alaska has a project that's going to be over \$40 billion in Chinese investment, and it means long-term potential sales here of liquid natural gas.

I would also say that the state of Iowa has had a sister state (relationship) with Hebei province since 1983, my first year as governor. The first province I visited as ambassador was Hebei, which surrounds Beijing. The party's secretary and the governor of Hebei both told me that in the next five years they intend to convert all home heating from coal to natural gas.

What about other opportunities with respect to trade, specifically steel, aluminum and auto parts? How should the United States address those areas with China?

We welcome our president's efforts to tackle the Chinese overcapacity in both steel and aluminum to supply-side reforms, but more needs to be done. We look forward to China fulfilling its pledges to do more to open its markets and level the playing field for U.S. workers, farmers, ranchers and companies. That said, the United States won't hesitate to use all the tools at our disposal, including multilateral and unilateral trade remedies, to address the lack of fair balance in reciprocal trade relationships.

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How concerned are you about cyberattacks from China, and how do you envision working to eliminate or at least minimize them?

There's been some progress. But cybersecurity continues to be an important issue for the United States and China. We're finding that North Korea is a source for some of these cyberattacks as well. It's important that our two countries pursue a sustained, meaningful dialogue to reduce the risk and develop a shared understanding of acceptable state behavior in cyberspace. We have to be vigilant about it. But the United States remains troubled by the increasing restrictive policies we see that limit access of U.S. technology companies to the market here in China.

The United States has withdrawn from the global climate pact. What effect do you see that having on our relations with China, which is still part of that pact?

I don't think it is going to have a significant impact because we have already provided technology and assistance to China in dealing with its pollution issues. I come from a state that is a leader in that issue; Iowa is the leading producer of ethanol. We produce more ethanol than we consume in gasoline. And that's very different than it was when I was first elected in '82. Unfortunately, we relied primarily on imported gasoline from the Middle East. We are also a leader in biodiesel, and 35.8 percent of Iowa's electricity comes from wind – more than any other state in America.

I have already talked with the Chinese about how to use more ethanol, and they're talking about going to 10 percent ethanol by 2020. Believe it or not, they're still using methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE), which polluted the groundwater on the East Coast and West Coast and was banned in most U.S. states more than a decade ago. So if we can replace MTBE with ethanol, that's not only good for the environment, but it could increase imports from the United States.

We also think there's an opportunity in the wind area. The problem in China is having the infrastructure to be able to transport electricity generated by wind to the urban areas, where they have the need for additional electricity. That's a big issue to Chinese consumers because air quality is really bad here and especially in Beijing and northeast China. We believe in going to energy as opposed to coal home heating, and for their industry, as well, using more ethanol, biodiesel and other renewable energy.

Another thing: I sat in on a meeting with Bill Gates and the president of the biggest coal company in China. They have a joint venture they're working on for fourth-generation nuclear plants that would be pollution-free, and that could make a big difference. So there's an opportunity for us to collaborate in the nuclear area. That's expensive, but it has a lot of potential to address some of the pollution problems China has.

When you leave the ambassador's office, what would success look like to you regarding the precarious U.S.-China relationship?

I'm very focused on the relationship today and the role I play as U.S. ambassador to China. When I met with President Trump before I came to Beijing, he gave me two marching orders: partner with China to denuclearize North Korea, and rebalance our trade relationship with China to make it more fair and reciprocal.

On the recent state visit, President Trump spoke directly with President Xi about our shared interest and concern. They agreed that we need to work together to expand areas of cooperation and generate positive outcomes for the benefit of all our citizens. Addressing our differences directly and frankly is the best way to solve problems.

Our trade relationship with China is already one of the largest in the world. But it is still restricted in many ways, across many sectors of the economy. Any meaningful step that makes that relationship more fair and reciprocal would be a success. China needs to liberalize the trade and investment environment for the benefit of both U.S. workers and the Chinese market. China needs to allow American products and American investors into its market on the same terms that Chinese products and investments enjoy in America and in other countries. Moving forward, these elements of our commercial engagement must be fair, balanced and reciprocal.

On North Korea, the key topic of discussion between our presidents was our continued joint effort to increase pressure and persuade North Korea to abandon its illegal nuclear and missile program. President Trump and President Xi affirmed their commitment to achieve a complete, verifiable and permanent denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. The bottom line is that President Trump and President Xi will not accept a nuclear-armed North Korea. 🌿

Henry Howard is deputy director of media and communications for The American Legion.

The Big Voice: Vets Put Their Lives on The Line, Now Their Lungs May Be on The Line

Military Veterans know the slogans, "Navy, Not for Self but Country," "Army Strong," and "Always Faithful/Semper Fidelis." No matter what branch of the military, the theme is being one and acting as one. And, military personnel have done that through World Wars, Korea and Vietnam, and most recently the Gulf War and Iraq and Afghanistan.

Help your country first, risks and liabilities later. For many Veterans, risks and liabilities are now lung diseases, such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and pulmonary fibrosis. The latest generation involved in desert fighting is experiencing an even higher occurrence of lung diseases.

Why Would I Develop COPD?

Veterans Administration (VA) research indicates that Veterans involved in desert fighting are three times as likely to develop COPD than the average American. Deployed Vets are more likely to develop COPD compared to soldiers who stayed home.

Why these startling statistics? It's

mostly environmental. Veterans were deployed and breathed toxic fumes.

- Burn pit next to camp?
- Near a car or roadside bomb?
- Caught in a sand storm?
- And, maybe smoked cigarettes?
- All can contribute to COPD!

Head to the VA Hospital for Treatment

Many Veterans rely on the VA for COPD treatments and the VA does approve several treatments. They are similar to what other insurance companies and Medicare and Medicaid provide.

The basic treatment – an inhaler, a steroid or a nebulizer – treats the symptoms but not the disease.

VA and DoD guidelines clearly state that treatments are for "managing the symptoms of COPD."

Vets find the Lung Institute Treats the Disease

The Lung Institute was founded to improve the quality of life for those suffering from chronic lung disease. And, Veterans are turning to the



Veterans are 3 times as likely to develop COPD as the average American. Learn how to treat the disease, not just the symptoms.

Lung Institute to treat their disease not just symptoms. Their stem cell therapy is remarkable for its ability to help ease symptoms and address progression of COPD.

After undergoing stem cell therapy, Veterans responded better to treatments than the general population. And, a typical patient reported some remarkable results.

There is no cure for lung diseases, but 84 percent of COPD patients receiving stem cell therapy at the Lung Institute report an improved quality of life within three months of treatment. They are more active and enjoying life again.

The Lung Institute has five clinics around the United States and they truly believe Veterans deserve the chance to fight COPD just like they fought for their country. ■

STEM CELLS: THE NEXT BIG THING

Lung disease accounts for the loss of 150,000 lives every year and is the third leading cause of death in the United States.

Specialists using stem cells from the patient's own body can offer treatment for people suffering from lung diseases like:

COPD ■ Pulmonary Fibrosis ■ Emphysema ■ Interstitial Lung Disease ■ Chronic Bronchitis

With clinics located in Dallas, TX; Scottsdale, AZ; Nashville, TN; Pittsburgh, PA; and Tampa, FL, the physicians at the Lung Institute are able to treat patients from anywhere in the United States and around the world. If you or a loved one suffers from a chronic lung disease, contact the Lung Institute to find out if stem cell treatments are right for you.

Call (888) 246-2941 to find out if you qualify or visit LungInstitute.com/Legion

All claims made regarding the efficacy of Lung Institute's treatments as they pertain to pulmonary conditions are based solely on anecdotal support collected by Lung Institute. Individual conditions, treatment and outcomes may vary and are not necessarily indicative of future results. The treatments, claims, and other information contained in this advertisement have not been evaluated or approved by the FDA. Individuals are encouraged to speak with his or her primary physician for treatment suggestions and conclusive evidence. All information in this advertisement should be used for educational and informational use only.

Vet Vacations

These travel tips can save military families and veterans hundreds of dollars.

BY MARC ACTON

You deserve a vacation. You've earned it. But you want your hard-earned travel budget dollars to stretch as far as possible. Fortunately, there are several ways to get more miles out of your money, whether you're active-duty military, retired or a veteran. Some of these companies cater specifically to veterans, some offer discounts to vets and active military, and some are just good deals.

ALL VETERANS

■ **Take advantage of the Veterans Holidays (VH) program**, which offers seven-night resort stays during off-peak dates for pennies on the dollar (currently \$349 for the whole week). The biggest drawback is that you're limited to mostly off-peak dates when there's "Space Available," or Space-A lodging. When Space-A isn't available, you can often still get a discount; it's just not going to be quite as much. The VH program lists mostly timeshare-style properties, like you'd find in most point-based vacation programs. They're located at many of the most popular vacation destinations (including overseas); there's a selection of all-inclusive resorts available with a range of discounts. To maximize the VH benefit, subscribe to its email newsletter or follow VH on social media, where it often discounts vacations even more, occasionally offering weeklong stays as low as \$279 or buy-one-get-one Space-A stays. That means you could get a week at a resort for around \$25 per day. VH doesn't verify your veteran status when you sign up, but resorts will when you check in using a military ID card or DD-214.

🌐 www.veteransholidays.com

■ **Visit the Soldiers', Sailors', Marines', Coast Guard and Airmen's (SSMA) Club**, a nonprofit hotel/hostel in midtown Manhattan that offers all servicemembers, retirees, veterans and veterans' widows a bed for as little as \$65 per night per person in its gorgeous, historic building – the same one in which the club has hosted vets since it first opened its doors in 1919. Have a military ID or DD-214 to verify veteran status when you check in. The hostel-style rooms are rented out by the bed, so it's perfect for singles looking for a place to crash after exploring the Big Apple. For couples, there are private rooms available, but you'll still use a shared bathroom. The cost to stay depends on rank, so active military officers will pay slightly more; still, compared to hotel rooms in the area that easily can cost four or five times as much, the SSMA Club is a steal. The building is in a quiet, residential neighborhood and has been renovated in recent years; while it doesn't offer the luxury that a hotel might, you won't be uncomfortable. You'll feel right at home as you walk through the halls and see photos of World War I doughboys who once stayed at the club. 🌐 ssmaclub.org

■ **Check out Airbnb**. Airbnb is a free-to-use website that connects people who have extra rooms (and full apartments or houses) with budget-conscious travelers who would rather save money than pay extra for a brand-name hotel and so-so service. During my family's last trip to Washington, D.C., my children and I got an entire basement apartment to ourselves – complete with three beds, a full bathroom and kitchen – in a residential location just a few blocks from the White House for \$200 per night. Similar hotel suites would've cost three to four times more. With Airbnb, you sacrifice some convenience, since you're not dealing with an established hotel; you might have to provide your own soap, toilet paper or other items. But you get extra space for your money, usually a full



kitchen (most hosts provide dishes), and you'll save hundreds of dollars on average. To make the most of the site, look for special incentives for first-time users. My family got an extra \$20 off our first booking. There aren't veteran or military discounts, but you'll still save money compared to booking a hotel. 🌐 www.airbnb.com

■ **Make use of federal and state parks and forests.** Even if you're not a tent-camping kind of family, many federal and state parks have cabins or rooms available for rent at cheap rates. State parks might not be located in the heart of the big city you're trying to visit, but they are affordable, and you're sure to find picturesque scenery. If you are a camping family, you can usually stay for \$20 or less (sometimes even free with a military discount), depending on the location. You get what you pay for – free locations will usually have no showers available and only rudimentary clearings for camping sites, but they're a great option for budget travelers. Bonus: current military (and dependents of deployed military) can get an annual pass that's good for free admission to all national parks and federal recreational land areas. 🌐 www.nationalparks.org

ACTIVE-DUTY MILITARY, RETIREES

■ **Make use of Space-A.** This often-overlooked benefit to current and retired military can be a great way to get from here to there, but it's an intimidating process for those unfamiliar with it. For those eligible (check the Air Force's Air Mobility Command website to see what category of travel you might be eligible for), it's as simple as getting some paperwork together and trying to be in the right place at the right time. You have to be a flexible traveler, as flight schedules can change, and you'll have to wait until there's space for you. But if you're open to going where the wind takes you, this can be an amazing way to save money on a worldwide vacation.

■ **Utilize Armed Forces Recreation Center (AFRC) resorts.** They're cheap (currently as low as \$113 per night to stay in Hawaii's AFRC), offer world-class resort-style entertainment and luxury lodging options, and are located in some of the most desirable vacation spots in the United States and around the world. Hawaii's Hale Koa Hotel (Waikiki Beach) and Orlando's Shades of Green (at the Walt Disney World Resort) are the continental U.S. facilities. There are also international locations in Germany and Korea, and a Navy resort in downtown Tokyo; the latter isn't technically an AFRC, but functions similarly. There are stringent requirements to stay in Germany's or Japan's facilities, making them mostly available only to individuals already stationed there, but the other locations welcome all active-duty, Guard and reserve servicemembers, as well as service-connected disabled veterans and retirees.

■ **Look for military lodging where you're going.** New York City has Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn. San Diego has Naval Base San Diego. Destin, Fla., has Tyndall Air Force Base. Each of these locations, along with U.S. bases around the entire globe, has military housing available to current and retired

military for reasonable rates, including cabins and family-style housing. These lodging options might not be premium products, but they're not premium-priced, either, so they're great options for budget travelers. Lodging is offered first to official military business travelers, so book well in advance to ensure availability.

■ **Use military discounts.** If you have an active military ID, just about every airline currently offers free checked baggage, even for leisure travel. Many lodging and entertainment options extend those discounts to retirees, too. This might not pay for your next skiing trip to Vail, but when used wisely it can add up.

Prices and policies for these programs change often, so be sure to check current pricing, availability and eligibility before making any travel plans.

Marc Acton is a chief warrant officer and Black Hawk pilot for the Tennessee National Guard, and a member of American Legion Post 156 in Brentwood, Tenn. In the civilian world, he's a writer and content strategist based out of Nashville.

FOUR USEFUL SMARTPHONE APPS



TRIPADVISOR

What it is: List of hotels, outings, restaurants, flights and general information on almost every city in the world

Use it for: Pick places to stay and things to do based on extensive ratings. TripAdvisor's massive popularity makes its ratings (provided by users) a reliable way to choose what to do, see and eat, and where to lay your head.



LONELY PLANET

What it is: A massive library of information on locations from the exotic to the everyday

Use it for: Lonely Planet's fantastic guidebooks are perfect for in-depth research on the places you're visiting, including maps, descriptions of local history and landmarks, and transportation options.



YELP

What it does: Provides quick and easy recommendations for all kinds of businesses

Use it for: The location-based app is one of the most popular ways to find recommendations for food and services stateside, and lets you search for terms like "breakfast" or "steak," and then check out reviews of the businesses by other users.



UBER

What it is: A taxi-like transportation service using independent drivers

Use it for: Almost every large city offers Uber service, which is an alternative to hailing cabs. It's often cheaper and more convenient; you just pull up the app and click a button, and you can watch the car come to pick you up.



James Jones, commander of American Legion Post 5 in Washington, D.C., shows off the post's building, which it's owned since 1944. Behind him are photos of Jones' predecessors as commander. Post 5's leadership is working with American University students to help tell the story of the nearly 100-year-old post and its members. Photo by Lucas Carter

CENTENNIAL

'History ... I would want to be part of'

American Legion Post 5 in Washington, D.C., boasts a treasure trove of history, artifacts and memorabilia. The collection may also be the 1919 post's solution to its membership challenges.

"I was getting desperate," says James Jones, Post 5's commander. "What's going to happen? What are we going to do when we don't have enough people?"

In stepped Brenda Smith, professor at American University's Washington College of Law Community and Economic Development Law Clinic, and Angie Chuang, a former associate professor at the university's School of Communication. A rotation of American University students is working with post members to leverage its history as a way to recruit, retain and engage members.

"We've taken a creative approach to issues of membership," says Smith, who sees the unique revitalization project as a way to better market the post to prospective members and the community. "It's the essence of the post. The memories and insights that come with military service are displayed with these artifacts. They are really important in documenting the role the organizations played in the civic life of these African-American soldiers."

Findings include a World War I-era photo of Post 5 namesake James Reese Europe with Red Cross nurses. Europe was a well-known bandleader and among the first black Americans in combat. He served as a lieutenant in the 369th Infantry Regiment, the Harlem Hellfighters.

Amid the photos, flags, awards, ledgers and newspaper articles, one can trace the beginnings of the nation's civil-rights movement.

"When we think of the civil-rights movement, we imagine these organizations growing in the 1950s and 1960s," Chuang says. "We often overlook the first civil-rights

organizations that were formed by veterans who were returning after World War I and World War II. They returned to cities like D.C. that were still segregated, and they decided to use their empowerment through these organizations to fight to make sure their rights were preserved. It's a wonderful story that The American Legion can tell through its own members and posts."

Jones sees the post's history as a way to attract new members. "This is not only educating us here (at the post) but getting people to recognize The American Legion as a whole," he says. "If I were a young veteran, this history is something I would want to be part of."

Anthony Hollinger, who grew up in his father's American Legion post in Philadelphia, is among Post 5's newest members.

"The opportunity to work with the gentlemen here, in the nation's capital, is one of those lifetime opportunities," he says. "There is something special about Post 5 and what it represents in the community."

Hollinger, who works for American University, sees the potential for veteran students to integrate into Post 5. "There are other universities that have affiliated with a local post," he notes. "I am hoping we can do the same. With the law school and main campus, and the history of the post, I see tremendous opportunity to connect and energize veterans young and old."

Students involved in the Post 5 project gain important real-life experience. They also get a better understanding of history and their place in it. Jones gives them credit.

"They have changed our focus from 'What are we going to do if the post closes?' to 'How do we keep alive?'" he says. "That's what all this is about."

— Henry Howard



USNS Hershel "Woody" Williams (ESB 4) will support a variety of missions, including air mine countermeasures, counterpiracy operations and maritime security.

Photo courtesy General Dynamics NASSCO

MILITARY AFFAIRS

Navy's newest ESB named for Legionnaire, Medal of Honor recipient

On Oct. 21, the Navy christened expeditionary sea base USNS *Hershel "Woody" Williams* (ESB 4) during a ceremony in San Diego.

The ship is the first to bear the name of Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer Hershel Woodrow Williams, the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient recognized for heroism at the Battle of Iwo Jima during World War II.

Williams' daughters, Tracie Jean Ross and Travie Jane Ross, who serve as the ship's sponsors, broke a bottle of wine across the bow to formally christen the ship, a time-honored Navy tradition.

"This ship honors a man who dedicated his life to service – heroic service as a Marine and continued service to his fellow veterans," Secretary of the Navy Richard Spencer said. "This dedication will live on in USNS *Hershel 'Woody' Williams* as the ship is deployed around the world bringing additional capability to our growing fleet."

Williams is optimized to support a variety of maritime-based missions and is designed around four core capabilities: aviation facilities, berthing, equipment staging support, and command and control assets. ESBs can be enhanced to meet special operations force missions through increased communications, aviation and unmanned aircraft system support.

Williams is a member of American Legion Post 177 in Barboursville, W.Va.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Jihadists on welfare dole

Jihadists from France and other European nations fighting for the Islamic State received welfare payments long after joining the terror group and traveling to Syria and Iraq, the London *Telegraph* reports. The stunning findings were revealed by French police and European agencies after a lengthy investigation into ISIS funding.

Hundreds of European ISIS fighters received welfare payments totaling 2 million euros (about \$2.3 million). More than 100 of the ISIS welfare recipients were French. "Other European countries involved were not named," the paper reports, before adding that most European ISIS fighters come from France, Germany and Britain.

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Standing NATO Maritime Group One trains with Finnish FNS Hanko during a passing exercise in the Baltic Sea. NATO photo by French Navy CPO Christian Valverde

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

'They will fight'

If Russia moves against NATO allies in the Baltic states or Poland, NATO will stand and fight, a key NATO commander recently said, in a statement of U.S. and Western resolve that evokes memories of the Cold War.

"There are U.S. troops, French, British troops in these countries, standing tall," reports U.S. Maj. Gen. William Hickman, deputy chief of staff at NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT).

"They will fight," he bluntly adds.

As *Breaking Defense* reports, Hickman made his remarks during the release of ACT's strategic review. The review notes that if the Baltics or Poland are attacked, the alliance plans not to retreat and regroup but rather to reinforce NATO's easternmost members.

"The risk for a major interstate conflict has increased," adds French Gen. Denis Mercier, commanding officer at ACT. For that reason, Hickman says NATO's military exercises "have to be harder and more stressful on our leaders."

WHITE HOUSE

The deregulation president

The Federal Register, which contains all federal agency rules, notices and regulations, topped 97,100 pages under President Obama. Under President Trump, it has been shaved down to 45,678 pages, *Investor's Business Daily* reports.

"The number of significant new rules for Trump totaled 65, way below the average of 213 significant rules in the pipeline in the previous six presidential terms, including Presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama," *IBD* adds. Citing Heritage Foundation research, *IBD* points out that "the costs of regulation soared from \$68 billion a year in direct costs under President George W. Bush, to \$122 billion under Obama."

ACTIVE DUTY

Army relaxes rules on recruits and marijuana

In an effort to boost its ranks and hit new targets for enlistees, the Army is relaxing its rules on granting waivers for marijuana use, *USA Today* reports.

"Granting more waivers to recruits who admitted to smoking marijuana – drug use is prohibited in the military – reflects its legal status in several states," *USA Today* notes, citing remarks from Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Snow, head of the Army's recruiting command.

"The big thing we're looking for is a pattern of misconduct where they're going to have a problem with authority," Snow said. "Smoking marijuana in an isolated incident as a teenager is not a pattern of misconduct." But Snow added that prospective soldiers must pledge not to use marijuana again.

Previously, a waiver had to be reviewed and granted by a two-star officer. Now waiver authority is delegated to lieutenant colonels. In fiscal year 2017, the Army granted 506 waivers – up from 191 waivers in 2016.

MEMBERSHIP

NEW POSTS

Clarence Hoffman Post 365, Hope, Kan.
Chartered Dec. 5 (15 members)

CSM Elijah King Jr. Post 217, Killeen, Texas
Chartered Nov. 15 (15 members)

William C. Stacey Post 206, Seattle
Chartered Nov. 8 (15 members)

Chris Gailey Post 450, Ochelata, Okla.
Chartered Oct. 24 (15 members)

Commonwealth Post 115, Farnham, Va.
Chartered Oct. 23 (15 members)

Post 505, Westville, Ind. Chartered Oct. 11 (10 members)

Post 132, Bright, Ind. Chartered Sept. 29 (13 members)

Douglas MacArthur Goudy Post 179, Montgomery, Ala. Chartered Sept. 21 (15 members)

Korean Bunker Post 829, Los Angeles
Chartered Sept. 14 (15 members)

Post 1228, Hueytown, Ala. Chartered Sept. 14 (27 members)

Post 309, Helotis, Texas Chartered Sept. 12 (18 members)

Post 411, Moore Haven, Fla. Chartered Aug. 10 (15 members)



Photo by Lucas Carter

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY

Sons put up big numbers

The year 2017 was big for Sons of The American Legion. Beyond reaching a record high in membership of 369,621, the program for male descendants of American Legion-eligible wartime veterans accomplished the following as of August:

\$2.1 million in fundraising and **269,475** volunteer hours in support of the Legion's Children & Youth programs

407,971 VA volunteer hours

27,225 visits to VA facilities, and **\$1.7 million** in cash donations and gifts

20,103 volunteer hours and **\$64,691** in support of the the Legion's Family Support Network

\$594,414 in contributions and **71,565** in volunteer hours to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, making SAL the largest single contributor

14,315 color guard appearances

152 American Legion Baseball team sponsorships

44,038 U.S. flag presentations and **2,202** flag-education programs conducted

13,938 flag-retirement ceremonies

528,414 U.S. flags placed at veterans cemeteries and handed out at parades

1,018 American Legion Boys State participants sponsored

Founded in 1932, Sons of The American Legion works in support of American Legion programs and services through 54 state and foreign detachments representing 6,148 squadrons.

 www.legion.org/sons

CAREERS



Refresh your résumé for 2018

As the new year begins, it's the perfect time to update, refresh and modernize your résumé. Here are a few essentials:

Include LinkedIn profile link. All savvy job seekers have a LinkedIn profile, so hopefully you do too. If not, it's time to create one; LinkedIn is the No. 1 resource for recruiters to find qualified talent. Then include a live link to your profile on your résumé. One click and someone can read it instantly.

Make your email address a live link. If you haven't already, be certain that your email address is a live link so that someone looking at your résumé online can instantly click and send you a message. Make it easy for someone to contact you.

Update your current job. If you're working, ask yourself what you accomplished in 2017 and add it to your résumé. Maybe it's only a sentence or two or a single bullet point, but you want to be certain that your résumé is up to date and includes your most recent experience, achievements, project highlights and skills.

Delete your mailing address. Most people don't like to include mailing addresses on their résumé anymore because of the tremendous uptick in online identity theft. Instead, follow these rules:

- If you're looking for work in the same immediate area in which you live, include your city, state and ZIP. That information can be key when recruiters are searching for ideal candidates in a local market.
- If you live in a major metro area and are looking for work in a two- or three-state area, consider something like this: NY/NJ/CT Metro.
- If you're willing to relocate, there's no need to mention anything about location.

Strategically use graphics. If you're particularly good with Word and can paste in some graphics, it will give your résumé instant distinction, and that is a wonderful thing. Things to consider are company logos, graphs and charts highlighting your performance, military insignia and other visually interesting additions.

Take the time to refresh your résumé – it will only take an hour or so – and you'll feel re-energized and ready to interview in 2018.

Wendy Enelow is co-author of "Modernize Your Résumé: Get Noticed ... Get Hired" and "Expert Résumés for Military-to-Civilian Transitions."



THE GREAT WAR 100

HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

'My salary simply can't keep up with the times'

Editor's note: Throughout the Great War's centennial, The American Legion

Magazine will publish excerpts from the letters of D.B. "Bernard" Ryan of Albion, N.Y., who served as an Army infantry officer and helped found American Legion Sheret Post 35 in 1919.

HEADQUARTERS CO., 309TH INFANTRY, CAMP DIX, N.J. FEB. 1, 1918

Dear Mother,

Riheldaffer was transferred with me and then almost immediately put on special duty. He is going to a "liaison" school and is representing the brigade. As such, an officer has to know telegraphy, wireless etc. Rihel is well fitted, being an electrical engineer by profession. He was with the GE at Schenectady. His school will last two months.

We have two rooms together and will be pleasantly situated when we make some necessary improvements. Your curtains will brighten things up and at the same time tone them down.

It is rather interesting to know that Rihel suggested rooming together here. We have liked each other much better lately – it has been growing and I have some remorse over my prior judgments. I think the visit of his girl put him in wonderful spirits. She is still in NY and he hopes to see her tomorrow. She is a wonder.

I hope your anniversary will be very happy. I am not sending flowers, since you request, but will you please go to Freeman's and get yourself a box of Stacy's fork-dipped chocolates?

FEB. 5, 1918

A list has come from Washington of the things an officer must have for overseas service and our Brigade Co has ordered us to get them by Feb 28. We'll probably be overseas by next Feb. So imagine putting money into rubber tubs for sponge baths, spurs when one has no horse, a wool lining for one's raincoat tho it is not permitted to wear one here, two pairs of trench boots which in a few months will be sold by the Q.M. for half the price we will pay etc etc etc including the field glasses for which I have already sent an order to Washington investing money in a P.O. order which was returned after a month or two. Glasses can be obtained when an officer is not actually ordered overseas. Well, I have some things on hand anyway – pistol etc. all of which are supposed to be issued on memo receipt by the ordnance dept. Our ordnance dept hasn't got them. And there you are, "in the army now" it's "plumb discouragin'." My salary simply can't keep up with the times. And only a few years ago I said I could take care of you well. I can do it of course but the point is the sacrifice a man has to make financially to be an officer.

Love, DBR



Photo courtesy Bob Miller

CENTENNIAL

Post 24, Lake Geneva, Wis.

Led by past post commander Wes Smale, members of Post 24 raised more than \$22,000 from the community to bring a Cobra AH-1F helicopter from Fort Drum, N.Y., to Lake Geneva for display at Harold A. Fritz Veterans Park.

SHARE YOUR POST'S LEGACY

Upload stories, photos and videos of your post's history on the Legion's Centennial Celebration website.

www.legion.org/centennial

EDUCATION

Lost education benefit



Q: *I was in the Army Reserve and was promised almost \$11,000 for college. Due to unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to attend school while in the reserve. Now I'm told that because I didn't use the benefit I lost it. Can anything be done to get the money now?*

A: Your reserve or Guard component will code your eligibility for Chapter 1606, Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve, into the DoD system if you become eligible. You are eligible for Chapter 1606 benefits if you meet these requirements:

- Incur a six-year Selected Reserve obligation.
- Complete Initial Active Duty for Training (IADT).
- Maintain SELRES status, serve in a drilling SELRES-status unit and remain in good standing.
- Have a high-school diploma or equivalent.

If you did not complete this obligation, you may not be eligible for the benefit. If you feel that's an error, call the nearest Army education office.

Valerie Heffner is a Marine Corps veteran and member of American Legion Post 27 in Apache Junction, Ariz. askvalerie@legion.org

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PERSONAL FINANCE



Turn saving into fun

FOCUS ON FINANCES



J.J. MONTANARO

I've never been called the life of the party, but I like to think I'm a pretty fun person to hang out with. However, when my duties as part of USAA's Military Advocacy team have me on the road extolling the virtues of saving and investing, there are times when I feel like the no-fun guy.

Sure, from a financial planner's perspective, "cut here," "cut there," "quit this," "quit that" and "save, save, save" are all viable ways to free up money to take care of your financial business and afford the things you want in life. But as sound as those messages may be, they conjure up images of sacrifice and austerity (do I *have* to give up that quick stop for a breakfast taco?). Not wanting to be thought of as a downer, I realized I need to change my message. And I had to look no further than the way we do things at our house to tweak my messaging: "Save for fun." Bam. Who doesn't like fun?

Here are four ways you can build some fun into your savings plan:

■ **Earmark your efforts.** If you look at your savings account and feel excited, you're probably the exception. Many of us just sigh and lament the lack of digits in our balance. But what if you opened your mobile app or went online and nicknamed that savings account "2019 Hawaii Vacation"? You just might feel a little excitement as you watch the funds accumulate. At our house, we have an emergency fund (no fun), vacation fund (name changes each year), a house fund (there's always something) and the Vegas fund (a lost cause, but fun). Each paycheck, we automatically add money to the various accounts, and when I review my accounts I see more than numbers.

■ **Visualize the end state.** The phrase "patience is a virtue" is key to financial security but flies in the face of society's growing need for instant gratification. By its very nature, saving or investing is the antithesis of today's "culture of

now." One way to win the battle against immediate satisfaction is to spend time, effort and emotional energy creating your vision of the pot at the end of the rainbow. The concept of retirement may sound boring. On the other hand, traveling the world to play the top golf courses on each continent is not. Create your vision, keep it front and center, and you'll have a savings purpose that's fun to think about and eases the pain of forgoing something today.

■ **Celebrate your savings successes.** Celebrating is fun, and doing it in a responsible way will help you stay on track to achieve your longer-term goals. It could mean a casual dinner out after you've met your quarterly debt-elimination goal, or a weekend getaway in lieu of a big vacation this year to pave the way for savings that will fund your dream vacation next year. It's always fun to get a pat on the back, so give yourself one for the good work you're doing. My wife and I are forgoing a big summer trip so we can ramp up for a 2019 European blowout. When it gets hot again we'll assess our progress toward that goal, congratulate ourselves (or course-correct) and push forward to 2019.

■ **Save that which creates no pain.** Unfortunately, cutting back is often the only lever we have to increase savings. However, a pay raise, promotion, bonus or windfall all offer opportunities to save or invest money that doesn't require sacrifice. You get the upside of increased savings without the downside of having to feel the pain of cutting out part of your spending. That's fun.

I'm a bit skeptical that this new approach will elevate me to life-of-the-party status; however, putting a little fun into your finances could be just what you need to boost your savings game to the next level and power you toward the places you want to go and the things you want to do.

J.J. Montanaro is a certified financial planner with USAA, The American Legion's preferred provider of financial services. Submit questions for him online.

www.legion.org/usaa/focusonfinances

VERBATIM

"This time, we will not only plant our flag and leave our footprint – we will establish a foundation for an eventual mission to Mars and perhaps, someday, to many worlds beyond."

President Donald Trump, signing his administration's first space policy directive, which calls on NASA to focus on returning Americans to the moon. The Dec. 11 ceremony included active NASA astronauts Christina Hammock Koch and Peggy Whitson, Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin, and retired astronaut Jack Schmitt, who flew on the Apollo 17 mission. *Source: Reuters*

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HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

After 72 years, a distinctive POW photo re-emerges

Bob Teichgraeber was a prisoner of war for 421 days at various German POW camps during World War II. After his release, like many veterans of his era, Teichgraeber rarely spoke about his war experience.

In fact, Teichgraeber was so quiet about it that he stuffed a photo from that day in a drawer in his Collinsville, Ill., home, where it stayed for 72 years.

"I thought there was a stigma about being a captive," says Teichgraeber, 97, a longtime member of American Legion Post 365 in Collinsville. "That's the way it was. I wasn't vocal about it."

The photo shows Teichgraeber in a British army uniform following his release. While it was common for the British to provide whatever clothes were available to freed GIs, World War II historians say such photos are rare.

Teichgraeber was captured Feb. 24, 1944, when his plane was hit while returning from a bombing run. He fractured his right ankle when he parachuted out, landing in a farmer's yard in Eppstein, Germany.

During captivity, the 5-foot-5 Teichgraeber went from 140 to 90 pounds. He survived a brutal 86-day hunger walk in the cold and snow, in addition to lice, fleas and dysentery.



"We were young," he says matter-of-factly. "We endured it."

One day, while being held in an abandoned home, Teichgraeber and his friend, John Bulla, were awakened suddenly at 5 a.m. "The door opened up: 'You're free!'" Teichgraeber recalls hearing a British soldier yell. "We went out and found some rifles and bayonets."

Teichgraeber and Bulla shared some eggs and a single potato. As they relished their first hours of freedom, the war still raged; at one point, a German shell landed less than 100 meters away. Soon, however, they met

up with a British unit that helped return them to U.S. forces.

Since rediscovering the photo, Teichgraeber's time as a POW has dominated his thoughts. "Every day I think about it," he says, motioning to a table overflowing with documents and maps related to his experience. "It's prevalent now because of this stuff here. You can remember so much vividly, yet you can't remember a lot."

— Henry Howard

Read more about Teichgraeber online:

www.legion.org/honor



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How to submit a reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280, e-mail reunions@legion.org or submit information via our website, www.legion.org/reunions.

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are publicized free of charge.

Your notice will appear on our Web site within a week and will remain available online until the final day of your reunion. Upon submission, please allow three months for your reunion to be published in print. **Due to the large number of reunions, The American Legion Magazine will publish a group's listing only once a year.**

Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

Other notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. **We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim.** Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail reunions@legion.org.

The magazine will not publish names of individuals, only the name of the unit. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life

memberships by their posts. **This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership.** Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.**

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.** Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

AIR FORCE / ARMY AIR FORCES

48th TFW 493rd Sqdn (1967-1970), Dayton, OH, 4/24-26, Dave Hosmer, (716) 822-3379, davehosmer3576@yahoo.com; **67th Tact Recon Wing (All Units)**, Orlando, FL, 5/7-11, Marion Edwards, (570) 222-4307, jeeme@nep.net; **502nd Tac Cont Grp (Korean War) - 605th, 606th, 607th & 608th AC&W Sqdns**, Washington, 4/21-25, Bill Aylward, (703) 715-0880, waylward1@verizon.net; **664th AC&W Sqdn & All Radar Service Vets**, Bellefontaine, OH, 6/22-24, Billy Stafford, (937) 592-2306; **3901st Strat Msl Eval Sqdn (SMES)**, Cheyenne, WY, 10/10-14, Clifford Dobbins, (573) 418-2322, cliffdobbins@yahoo.com; **F-111**, Fort Worth, TX, 4/28-29, Monica Hess, (480) 677-1689, twgurl54@hotmail.com

ARMY

1st Cav Div Assn, Charleston, WV, 6/20-24, Dara Wytler, (254) 547-6537, firstcav@lcds.org; **1st Trans Bn (FAMF)**, Springfield, IL, 5/5-9, Bruce Binns, (269) 547-0186, ccbappiper@gmail.com; **15th Med Bn 1st Air Cav Div**, Williamsburg, VA, 4/26-28, Dan Toothman, (757) 872-8504, danmedevac19@outlook.com; **119th Assault Heli Co (Camp Holloway)**, Branson, MO, 9/18-20, Spencer Gardner, (817) 629-3155, spencerhgardner619@gmail.com; **3-4 Cav**, Colorado Springs, CO, 9/26-30, Dave Cox, (830) 895-1172, cox.a.34cav@gmail.com; **4th Bn 39th Inf Rgt 9th Inf Div (Vietnam, 1966-1967)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 8/15-18, Jim Haines, (303) 809-1815, lzbearcat67@live.com; **513th Maint Bn (Phu Bai, Vietnam)**, Boston, 5/12-12, Leo Egan, (781) 843-6138, leoegan02184@gmail.com; **566th Trans Co**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 5/1-6, Wesley Taylor, (904) 335-7402, vietnam566th@yahoo.com; **A Co 11th Armd Cav**, Fairmont, MN, 6/22-23, Carl Vogt, (507) 776-7292, cvogt@frontier.net; **ASA Okinawa**, Washington, 9/12-16, Gary Duenow, (319) 393-2234, thedue60@yahoo.com; **OCS 6-65 Reunion**, Fort Benning, GA, 3/26-28, Dave Schollman, (952) 215-6018; **Vietnam Transportation & Gun Trucks (The Gathering)**, Pigeon Forge, TN, 8/14-18, John Dodd, (434) 724-1469, johndodd@centurylink.net

JOINT

All Former Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia Advisers and Counterparts, Pensacola, FL, 4/11-15, Lewis Grissafi, (619) 922-8682, luisaffi@yahoo.com; **Opn Deep Freeze - Old Antarctic Explorers Assn (OAEA)**, San Antonio, 5/9-11, J.L. West, (210) 651-3650, oaea2018reunion@aol.com

MARINES

1/5 (1986-1992), Macomb, IL, 9/7-9, Scott Hainline, (309) 351-2050, ptimfi@yahoo.com; **2nd Bn 4th Mar - Battle of Dai Do 50th Anniv**, Quantico, VA, 4/30-5/3, Frank Valdez, (714)

306-2329, fxala@hotmail.com; **Mar Air Support Sqdn 3 (MASS-3)**, 1st Mar Air Wing (Vietnam), Oceanside, CA, 7/17-19, Craig Hullinger, (309) 634-5557, craighullinger@gmail.com

NAVY

Albemarle, Springfield, IL, 5/5-9, Bruce Binns, (269) 547-0186, ccbappiper@gmail.com; **Benner DD/DDR 807**, Washington, 9/6-9, Jack Conwell, (724) 674-6041, coins.2540@gmail.com; **Castor AKS 1 & 291st Eng Cbt Bn**, Memphis, TN, 4/10-13, James McMillen, (757) 719-8112, geechieandshowme@cox.net; **Conservator ARS 39**, Jacksonville, FL, 4/26-28, Kevin Weaver, (610) 780-5484, kcwrdc@yahoo.com; **Douglas H. Fox DD 779**, Warwick, RI, 9/12-16, Joe Sczyrek, (201) 563-1264, dd779association@verizon.net; **Forrest B. Royal DD 872**, Wisconsin Rapids, WI, 6/14-18, Ron Larsen, (715) 423-8905, mosbyusn@wcctc.net; **Gregory DD 802**, Monterey, MN, 4/22-26, Ken Boyer, (651) 633-6247, giorabi13@usfamily.net; **Howard W. Gilmore AS 16**, St. Louis, 5/3-7, Francis Judy, (814) 432-8194, gjudy@verizon.net; **John Young DD 973**, Mobile, AL, 6/21-24, Michael Trotta, (727) 505-4222, reunion@dd973.org; **McCloy**, Baltimore, 10/19-21, Pete Russo, (732) 312-2337, pgrosso10@yahoo.com; **Mine Div 113 Vietnam**, Charleston, SC, 10/18-21, Don Hecke, (501) 620-0593, don9329@hotmail.com; **Nitro AE 2/23**, San Antonio, 6/21-24, Bob Eberlein, (574) 277-3128, ebb23@aol.com; **Rupertus DD 851**, Charleston, SC, 5/3-6, Alan Lewis, (914) 443-5496, alewis@hvc.rr.com; **Seaplane Sailors**, Pensacola, FL, 5/2-6, Robert Tibbetts, (829) 223-7871, bobrt42@twc.com; **Takelma ATF 113 (Nat'l Assn of Fleet Tug Sailors)**, Baton Rouge, LA, 10/24-28, Mike Simmons, (260) 499-0663, micsimmons@hotmail.com; **Tidewater AD 31**, Branson, MO, 9/10-15, Dean Agee, (417) 759-2860, rdmlagee@gmail.com; **Tin Can Sailors Bull Session**, Jacksonville, FL, 12/10, Lou Guariniello, (727) 868-9368, jandlassoc@aol.com; **Tin Can Sailors Midwest Bull Session**, Kearney, NE, 4/6-7, Greg Jensen, (308) 234-1581, gwjensen@frontiernet.net; **Tng Sqdn 29**, Corpus Christi, TX, 3/22-25, Dorris Jaquysh, (512) 379-6133, dvjaquysh@austin.rr.com; **Truckee AO 147**, San Antonio, 9/12-16, Mike Landers, (770) 926-6965, mlanders52@yahoo.com; **VP-40**, Nashville, TN, 9/5-8, Guy Fisk, (828) 505-8013, ggfisk@vp40.com; **Warrington DD 843**, Deerfield, IL, 9/26-30, Stan Prager, (916) 791-6700, stashuman843@msn.com; **Windham Bay CVE 92**, Collinsville, IL, 9/19-23, M.W. Steward, (210) 495-4845, windhambay@aol.com; **Zellers DD 777**, Buffalo, NY, 9/17-20, Lester Sinton, (561) 732-5162, notnis1@comcast.net

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

Post 396, MI: Brian Chmielewski
Post 188, NJ: Robert J. Brownlee
Post 376, WI: Earl R. Drehmel, George M. Mueller, Robert D. Ziemann

IN SEARCH OF

1st Bn 69th Armor 3rd Bde TF 25th Inf Div (Pleiku, Vietnam, 1966), Benjamin Gallagher, (253) 432-4360, jadruss@comcast.net
2nd Armd Div 67th Med 67th Bn Med Det (Mainz, Germany, 1954-1958), A.B. Barnes, (919) 688-4775
28th Strat Recon Wing / 28th AB Grp (Ellsworth AFB, SD, July 1953-June 1955), Paul Nordstog, (406) 252-9666
238th Aerial Wpns Co Gunrunners (An Khe, Vietnam, 1969-1970), Richard Cleek, (309) 637-4938
534th Eng Bn (Fort Clayton, Panama Canal Zone, 1960-1963), Steve Bohn, (516) 232-4325, captainvideo5757@gmail.com
932nd Field Arty (Camp Carson, Colorado Springs, CO, 1953-1955), Bill Acton, (734) 776-5491, wcacton33@icloud.com
A Co 1st Bn 16th Inf Div (Vienna, Austria, 1946-1948), Byron Wilson, (770) 963-1657
C Co 1st Bn 70th Armor (Gablingen, Germany, 1963-1965), James "J.R." Woolums, (210) 680-0877, woolums@satx.rr.com
CIB (1943-1945), Michael Kallio, linti1126@gmail.com
Co 513 (San Diego, Aug-Oct 1965), Allen Throm, palal6872@gmail.com
CVG-21 & VA-212 Line Crew (Moffett Field, CA, 1956-1958), Joe Lee, (678) 458-0463
HQ & HQ Co (Fort Richardson, AK, 1967-1968), Walter Noordam, (402) 305-9056, mrsonnyusa2@hotmail.com
VF-111 (Kitty Hawk & NAS Miramar, 1962-1965), Richard Caria, (570) 489-0771, rcaria520@comcast.net

TAPS

Alson W. Boleware, Dept. of Mississippi. Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 2002-2013.
Hugh A. Broome, Dept. of Mississippi. Dept. Cmdr. 1969-1970, Nat'l Exec. Cmte. Alt. Memb. 1970-1972, Nat'l Americanism Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1972-1976 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1977-1978.
Vernon J. Peterson, Dept. of Utah. Dept. Cmdr. 1996-1997 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Vice Chmn. 1996-2007.
Charles P. Powell Jr., Dept. of Virginia. Dept. Cmdr. 1970-1971, Nat'l Merchant Marine Cmte. Memb. 1971-2013 and Nat'l Conventional Armed Forces Cmte. Memb. 2013-2017.
Roselynn J. Utech, Dept. of Oklahoma. Dept. Cmdr. 1990-1991, Nat'l Cmte. on Children & Youth Region 4 Chmn. 1993-1994, Nat'l Cmte. on Children & Youth Region 4 Vice Chmn. 1992-1993, Nat'l Cmte. on Children & Youth Region 4 Memb. 1991-1992 and 1994-1995, Nat'l Distinguished Guests Cmte. Vice Chmn. 2002-2004, Nat'l Mbrshp. & Post Activ. Cmte. Memb. 1995-2001 and Nat'l Sec. Cncl. Memb. 2015.

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Most household injuries are caused by saying “whatever” during an argument.

A PRIEST commented at a funeral, “We are gathered here today to pay homage to a good man. He was a kind man, a man everyone loved, and a man who treasured his family as much as his family treasured him.”

The widow suddenly leaned over and whispered to her grandson, “Go make sure that’s your grandpa in the coffin.”

A HUSBAND AND WIFE were reading a magazine and newspaper when she burst out laughing. “Listen to this,” she said. “There’s a classified ad here where a guy is offering to swap his wife for a season ticket to the stadium.”

“Hmm,” her husband replied, not looking up from his magazine. Teasing him, the wife asked, “Would you swap me for a season ticket?”

“Never,” he said.

“That’s sweet. Tell me why not.”

“The season’s more than half over.”

I’M NOT ONE to brag about my finances, but my credit-card company calls me almost every day to tell me my balance is outstanding.

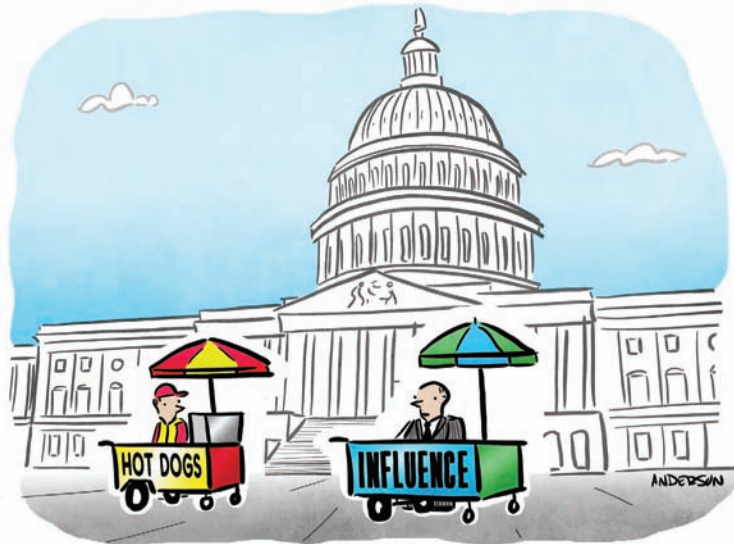
A DOCTOR told a discharged patient, “You’re completely cured. I must tell you, it was your incredible will to survive that saved you.”

“Thanks, Doc,” the patient replied. “Remember that when you write up my bill.”

I DON’T WANT to be a millionaire. I just want to have enough money to stare off into the distance while pumping gas.



“Run! It’s Armaglutin!”



“What do you have that doesn’t taste like me?”

A COUPLE went to see a movie on Valentine’s Day. As they sat in the darkened cinema waiting for the film to start, the screen finally lit up with a flashy advertisement for the concession stand. The couple realized there was no sound. The film began, but the silence continued.

Suddenly, out of the darkness, an irritated voice shouted, “OK, who’s got the remote control?”

ONE YOUNG WOMAN asked another, “How did you like the ballet?”

“It was alright,” the other replied, “but I don’t understand all that toe dancing. Why don’t they just get taller people?”

“AN OHIO-BASED COMPANY made a cup holder for dip that attaches to a dashboard so you can eat chips and dip while you drive. I don’t have a joke about this. I just wanted to remind you we’re still the greatest country in the world.” – Conan O’Brien

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Voice Dial	FREE	FREE
Nationwide Coverage	YES	YES
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